

in UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1980

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NEWS

The wholeness of God

By Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart

During the past 8½ years I've pastored churches full-time and on many occasions grieving people have made comments such as: "God took my daughter from me. I guess God had a higher purpose for her" or "I don't understand why my father has cancer, but I know God knows best."

Angry people have said: "War is such a waste, but who are we to question God's plans." They also say, "Stealing is wrong. I can't justify the reasons I was robbed, but I know God has a reason for this." Time after time individuals indicated that they believed that evil, tragedy, sorrow, and/or injustice they experienced came from divine plans drawn for their lives.

Many persons worship a "God" who is a "Cosmic Hitler," a "Divine Fist," a "Moral Dictator," an "Unrestrained Sadist," or a "Cruel Taskmaster." Most persons holding such a model for God uppermost in their minds base their theology on selected Old Testament images or prophetic portrayals of the "end times."

I realize that in addressing this particular issue that I may shatter the fragile world of some very "borderline" individuals. Some people need an "Angry God" in order to maintain their equilibrium. On the other hand, it is my firm belief that whenever a woman or man worships a "Fiendish God" the net result is a very low self image, lots of unhealthy guilt, a pervading sense of fear, a deep insecurity, or a "faith" which is so fragile that it is easily destroyed.

I believe that MCC needs to boldly address the many models of God "treasured" by our congregants and ministers alike, and murder and bury those images which portray the brute idol who oppresses as IT tries to pass as "God." We may lose some people because their "faith" is weak -- but I think we'll help the majority. Does

one's theology influence one's mental health or does one's mental health create one's theology? Or are the two intertwined?

In the introduction to the book of Hebrews, the author in beautiful, classical Greek declares that "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our parents by the prophets." GOD SAID DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PROPHETS. It stands to reason that if you and I study the prophetic literature to determine what God is like then our picture of God will be fragmentary at best. As long as we immerse ourselves in the models of God as perceived by "men" who grasped but a partial glimpse of God we shall always have a distorted and incorrect understanding of God. For Christians to regress to that level is shoddy scholarship at best!

The author of this passage continues "but in these last days God has spoken to us by a Son. . . He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of God's nature. . . ." The Greek word for "stamp" conveys the thought of "Expressing exactly both the essence and being" of God. Jesus Christ is not a reflection of God which by the very definition of the word would leave room for distortion. The historical Jesus is the exact reproduction of the "COMPLETE" nature of God. (John says in his Gospel that Jesus is the LOGOS who is God.) As we look at the God/human who lived so many years ago we see precisely what God is like. No "many" nor "various" ways -- no fragmentation -- no partial glimpse! The one whom we see is God incarnate!

This naturally means that any theology of God or model for God which would contradict what we know of both the words and life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth is a false distortion. Jesus loved both the lovely and the unlovely. His only

harsh comments were addressed to the self-righteous hypocrites who tried to lay "guilt trips" on the masses. After reading the Gospels I find no evidence that Jesus was a "Moral Dictator," a "Divine Fist," a "Cosmic Hitler," an "Unrestrained Sadist," nor a "Cruel Taskmaster." Jesus was incarnate love! God is unrestrained love!

How can Love bestow war, injury, "premature" death, etc. on people? Love cannot! (I do not believe love EVER blesses war -- war is anathema to God and is a result of the ugly side of human nature.) Accidents occur, cells grow in crazy ways, parts of bodies deteriorate before they should, people decide to destroy other people. To blame these things on love is to create a deified monster which is in no way related to the image of God as revealed in the life of the historic Jesus.

I believe that in MCC we must preach and teach that God is love and that God is totally revealed in Jesus Christ. To do so will shatter models of God understood and cherished by many. To do so will ultimately result in theology which will promote healthy concepts of the self, an absence of guilt, and a positive image of others.

In closing I will quote one of my favorite passages of Scripture: I John 4:17-18 --

"And as we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgement, but can face God with confidence and joy, because God loves us and we love God also. We need have no fear of someone who loves as perfectly; God's love for us eliminates all dread of what God might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what God might do to us, and shows that we are not fully convinced that God really loves us." I John 4:8B
"... God is love."



IN UNITY

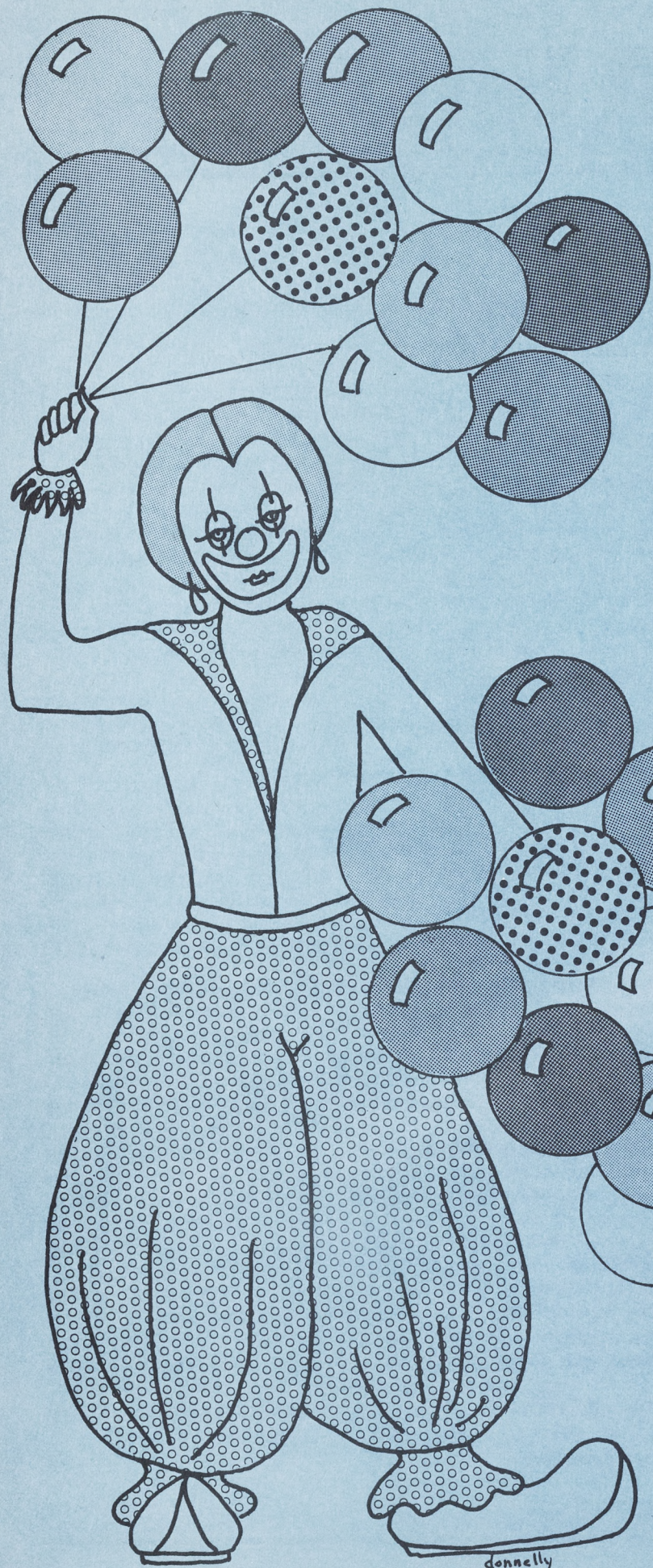
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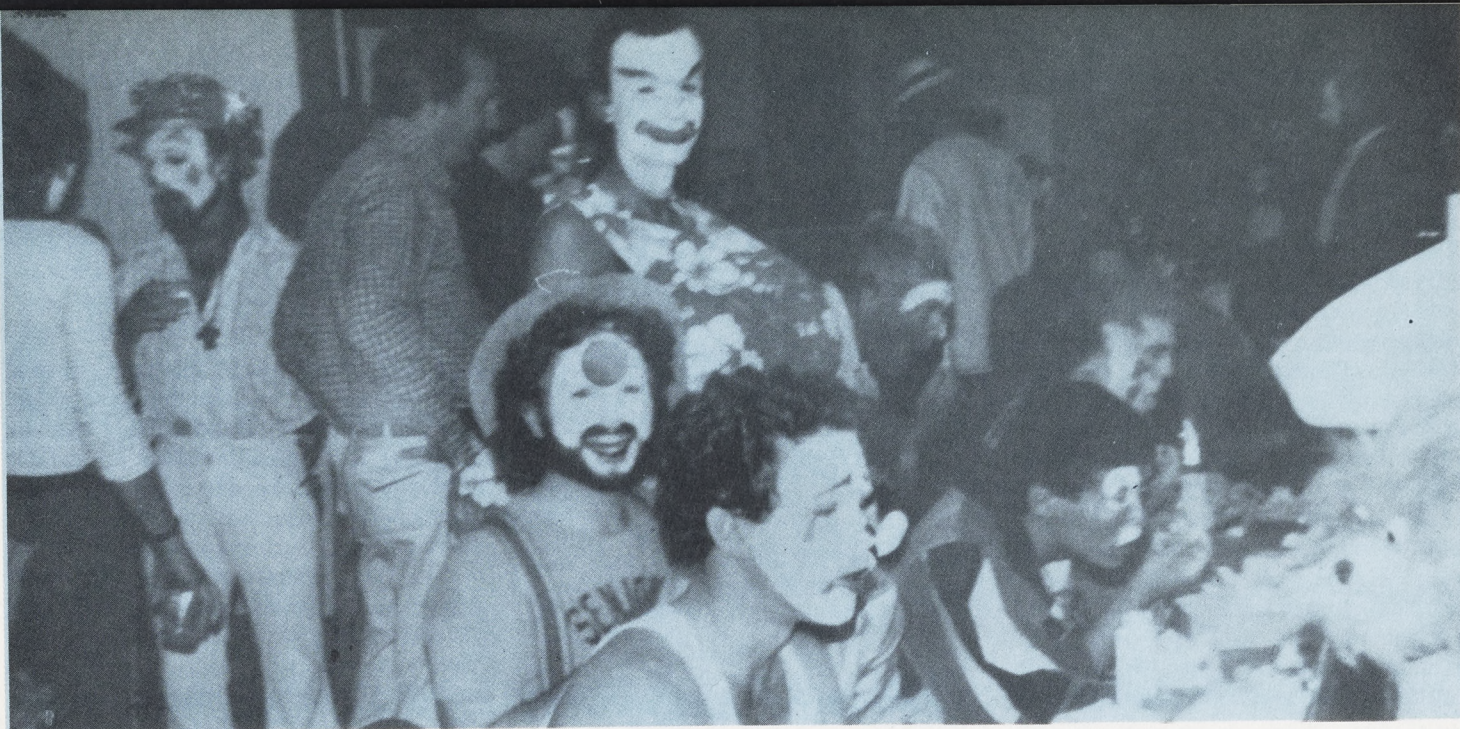
be a clown

be a clown

be a clown

for....

CHRIST!



Clown ministry

Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco has founded a "Clown Ministry," a new ministry which exists in more than thirty Christian churches in the United States. Thus far, MCC San Francisco's clowns have led in worship, participated in the church's ministry to a convalescent center, confronted "ex-gay" Christians on Castro Street and served a meal to the congregation.

The clown serves as a symbol of hope, as a nonconformist, as a servant figure and, perhaps most significantly, as a vulnerable lover. The Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey recently preached "Send in the Clowns" in San Francisco. She said that Jesus was, in his way, a clown, willing to seem foolish and to risk the ridicule of others for the love he lived. She reminded the congregation of its call to be "fools for Christ." The clowns presented a mime interpretation of commitment to Christ and the entire congregation walked to the corner of 18th and Castro Streets and released 2,500 balloons printed "MCC San Francisco. Gay Christians!" to the air above the city.

The eight clowns hope to draw the attention of gays to let them know that Christianity is not the joyless sameness which many present. They mix the roles of clown and mime in expressing without words the Good News in images of love, happiness and color.



TOP: MCC's clowns make up in preparation for Gay Night at the Ringling Brothers Circus. ABOVE: Mime presentation at morning worship service as a clown "Christ" figure accepts the commitment of clowns representing people from various walks of life.

A LENTEN MEDITATION

a parable of hope

By Rev. A. Stephen Pieters

The idea for this story grew out of an idea for a Palm Sunday sermon that was suggested to me by Donald Wardlaw, the professor of Homiletics at McCormick Theological Seminary. I offer it as a Lenten Meditation, because I hope that it raises questions that concern us all as disciples of Christ.

The scene is Washington, D.C., late in June, 1976. There is Bicentennial fever in the air, and people are hoping that this great nation is going to find a real renewal in the anniversary of their establishment as a country. Attention is focussed on the nation's capitol, where hundreds and thousands of people are thronging to have a first-hand look at the Nation's archives: the evidence of their history as a people. Crowds are gathering to view the ground that great leaders walked, the buildings that they lived in, the papers, the monuments: all the evidence of the history of progress in this country and in the world. People are coming together to remember, celebrate, and hopefully be inspired and renewed by the events of the Bicentennial.

There is a rumor going around the Capitol. The rumor has it that there is to be a really terrific leader coming to the Bicentennial; he's got a small group of people really excited, doing a lot of good work, and really making a difference in the lives they touch. It is even rumored that he is a physician as well as a teacher and political hopeful. From all reports, he is really quite an extraordinary man. There is a real sense of anticipation and excitement as the day of his arrival approaches. No-

body's really sure who he is, or where he's from, but he's supposed to make his dramatic entrance onto the national scene after an extraordinary record of local service. He is supposed to arrive just prior to the big day, the Fourth of July. The reports are that he is going to make his entrance on Air Force One, since it has been hinted that he is a close personal friend of the President's. Then, of course, there is expected to be a long motorcade, a parade, and a speech at the Washington Monument. It is hoped that this will mark the beginning of the end of oppression for minority groups of all kinds. Legislation will be enacted, disenfranchised people will take on real leadership roles; liberation will be accomplished!

It is finally the day of his scheduled arrival. People throng around the airport and crowd themselves along the Mall to catch a glimpse of this new leader as he makes his entrance. Then the truth begins to leak out through the crowds. He isn't arriving on Air Force One; he's arriving by car. Pretty soon, a little blue Volkswagen Bug, all mud-splattered and beaten-up, starts down the road toward the Washington Monument. Word spreads: this is it! That's the car that this new leader is arriving in! Some people turn away in disbelief, but many stay around to take a look, just to check it out. The VW approaches to great cheers. People strain for a look. Some people just can't believe it. Inside is only one person: she turns out to be a Black Lesbian Feminist from South Africa. Well, some people just can't relate to that. How could a woman possibly be a leader of the caliber that the people needed and were looking for? And goodness knows, many people couldn't possibly relate to a Black leader, since she would be so bound up with her own issues, that she obviously could not understand the issues of all the other groups. And everybody knows a Lesbian can't be taken seriously: she would probably want everybody to become a homosexual, and then what would we do to continue the species? And how could anybody from South Africa possibly understand or make a difference in the United States, with its unique lifestyle? Now if she were from Los Angeles, or New York, or Boston . . .

But there are some who stick around for the speech. There are quite a few actually. It is estimated by some that there are over a hundred thousand present for the speech; but of course that figure comes from people who are suspected of being her followers, and can't possibly be trusted. The speech is very inspiring, as it expresses the anger and frustration of masses of people. The media all but ignore it.

The following week-end, an apparent murder is reported in the newspapers, buried among the features on the official Fourth of July Festivities: a Black woman from South Africa with alleged political ambitions has been found on a hill outside Washington. She is sprawled across the hood of her VW Bug, brutally murdered with a bullet in her side. An acquaintance has claimed the body. It is rumored that she had many friends and followers, but none of them have been able to be contacted at this time. Most of them are apparently staying in Washington somewhere; but with all the tourists visiting the Capitol City for the Bicentennial, it has been difficult to find them. According to some reports, one who was thought to be her friend has been apprehended; however, she claims no knowledge of the murdered woman. The incident is not considered very important by many: Black women are brutalized and murdered fairly frequently around metropolitan areas. In all probability, the incident will be soon forgotten.

Several years later . . . there are a few people who evidently claim that the Black woman is still alive; that indeed, during their last meal together, the night before her murder, she had promised to return to her followers. The people who are making this claim of her reappearance try to carry on the work she started. They claim that everything that she represented, everything that she did, everything that she was, is still alive and present among the people. Her soul exploded and was set free in the world, according to believers. Some skeptics are trying to make these people prove that she is still alive, by presenting physical evidence, since it is such an outrageous claim that someone who was so

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Spotlight:

IN & AROUND THE NW DISTRICT

By Paula Nielsen

We of the Northwest District are proud to be a vital part of the expanding world-wide ministry of UFMCC. Over the past year our district has pioneered some important changes as it continues to grow.

At District Conference in November, 1978, which convened in San Jose, California, we decided to elect a full-time, salaried, district coordinator. Rev. A. Austin Amerine, then pastor of MCC-Portland, was elected on a one-year basis. Consequently, on June 10, 1979, Amerine left his pulpit in Portland, Oregon to assume the district coordinator responsibilities on a full-time basis. All of our 19 churches, missions and study groups (except one) have decided to increase their district tithe from 2% to 5% to provide funding for the district coordinator's salary.

At the last District Conference (in Portland, Oregon) Amerine was re-elected district coordinator for a three-year term. Herm Mank was re-elected as district treasurer. We are indeed proud to have such a dedicated and gifted person so active in district affairs. Mank continues to serve this Fellowship in various capacities as well (such as: Chairperson of the Commission for Lay Concerns and the By-laws Committee). Mank ran for a

position on the Board of Elders, as a layperson, at the last General Conference. Rev. Claudia Vierra, pastor of MCC-East Bay in Oakland, California was re-elected as assistant district coordinator. Madeline Reed of MCC-Sacramento was re-elected district clerk. These positions continue on a year-to-year basis.

Also, at the last conference, we made a few minor changes in the District's Standard Operating Procedures. For example, the role of district secretary was clarified by renaming the position district clerk thereby removing "helping with the district coordinator's correspondence" from the list of the clerk's duties. We already have a procedure for the district coordinator to appoint people to do such tasks as correspondence. Furthermore, with a local secretary, the district coordinator is able to operate more efficiently. We voted to appropriate \$300 per year for secretarial support for our district coordinator. For the time being, Amerine has appointed Paula Nielsen, secretary for Portland MCC, to give him secretarial help.

Another path that this district is pioneering is the planning of the upcoming Spring/Summer Camp Meeting/Retreat, which will transpire June 21 through June 29, 1980 at the Jolly Giant Conference

Grounds of the Humboldt State University Residence Campus in Arcata, California (located in Northern California). The Retreat will consist of eight full days and nights of workshops, seminars, AA meetings, social events and worship services. Some of the exciting things in the offing are: A morning Bible study series on Introduction to the New Testament conducted by Rev. Elder John Hose ("Pappa John"); a series of workshops on the Second Coming of Christ conducted by the Rev. Elder Troy Perry; prayer workshops by Rosalind Rinker; and evening worship services. Many other events for the Retreat are still in the planning stage -- for example, negotiations are underway with Samaritan Theological Institute to conduct seminars for credit. The cost per person for the Retreat will run in the neighborhood of \$22 per day which will include lodging and all meals. While this is definitely a NW District function, clergy and laity from the entire Fellowship are invited to attend. Watch future issues of IN UNITY for registration information and details.

Yes, even as the Universal Fellowship continues its rapid growth and development, we feel that the NW District is helping to pave the way for the exciting days that lie ahead for all of us.



You may have seen this symbol around people's necks or on the front altar cloth at church. Have you ever wondered just what it meant - what was the meaning of the various symbols?

It is not a new combination. In fact it dates from the very earliest days of Christianity and is found in many churches other than MCC.

In the centre you will see two letters which look like PX - these are Greek letters

X - written in English
CHI - pronounced CH

P - written in English
RHO - pronounced R

The MCC Cross

Put them together and you have the abbreviation of "CHRISTOS" - Christ - "The anointed of the Lord."

Perhaps the most famous organization that has used this symbol is Holy Name Society of the Roman Catholic Church. The members used to wear this symbol in their lapels to honour Christ and tried to use the name of our Saviour in honour rather than dishonour, as is the way of our modern world far too often. This Society is almost extinct but let us all remember and honour one of its ideals - "That in the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (Phillipians 2:10)

For the other two symbols we have to turn to the Book of Revelations where we read in the 1st Chapter, "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end,

saith the Lord God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty." Later in the same chapter we read "Fear not. I am the first and the last." The letters look like this:

Α Alpha

the 1st letter of the Greek alphabet

Ω Omega

the last letter of the Greek alphabet

We put them all together, they spell Christ, first and last. And when we wear the MCC cross, we proclaim that Jesus, the Christ, in whom we trust, is first in our lives, last in our lives, and all the way in between. Let us wear it with pride, to proclaim our allegiance to Christ; and let us wear it humbly, recognizing our weakness, which can be made strong in Christ. (Reprinted from The Way, MCC Hartford, Connecticut)

ministering

By Jim Kerber

MCC East Bay

to ministers

This past Spring at the Northwest District Conference -- which was focused on lay involvement in the church -- I conducted a workshop entitled Ministering to Ministers. I've been in MCC for almost nine years -- five as a member of MCC San Francisco and nearly four at MCC East Bay -- and I've lived with ministers as room-mates. I've seen their pain, the burdens they carry and the seeming lack of concern for them as human beings from members of the church. I felt it was time SOMEONE said something about this subject. Since it would probably sound like sour grapes coming from a member of the clergy, I decided that it was a subject a layperson could pursue with more information from the clergy about their lives in the professional ministry. I felt called to share this information with other laypeople.

I developed a questionnaire and sent it to all the professional ministers in the Northwest District, a few clergy friends outside the district and a sprinkling of elders. To obtain more information for the workshop I asked these ministers how they felt their congregations treated them, whether they felt they had free time and privacy and if they felt their congregations fed them emotionally and spiritually. I also left a few inches of space for them to list the "irritants and expectations" their congregations burdened them with. I asked for comments on what they would like to see happen at the workshop.

I expected to get some of the questionnaires back, hoped for enough to give me some input as to how to structure the workshop, but considering the busy schedule of the clergy, I didn't expect to get all that many back. I also thought I had lots of answers already and just needed some confirmation from the questionnaire.

I was overwhelmed by mail! Within a few days the responses were pouring in. I received questionnaires back from over 75% of the ministers contacted! The volume of response convinced me that there was certainly a need for this workshop and that the clergy was very concerned about being ministered to by the laity.

I assumed that I would only hear from those who were feeling wounded by their congregation. Most of the conversations I'd had with the clergy on this subject had centered around their feelings of being used by the laity and not appreciated. The responses on the questionnaires varied



from happy clergy who seemed to be supported adequately by their congregations to clergy who were holding themselves together only with the grace of God and getting little or no support from their congregation. My preconceived ideas about the workshop had to be reevaluated. What I thought was going to be a simple matter of sharing these ministers' concerns grew much more complex. I had much information to impart and many questions still to ask and only an hour and a half to present the workshop.

The questions that seemed to need most urgently to be asked were: What are our responsibilities as laypeople to the clergy we call to guide us? Why aren't we allowing them the freedom and the space to minister effectively to us?

The questionnaire began with some basic questions concerning the daily facts of life most laypersons take for granted. 64% of the clergy responding felt their salary was inadequate. Moreover, when

compared to their professional training and expertise, 100% felt they were underpaid. Adequate or inadequate, only 16% felt their churches weren't making special efforts to do anything about their salary. 80% received their salaries on a regular basis -- but 27% had to ask someone for it.

I know as a layperson I wouldn't work for less than a reasonable amount of money -- even though I love my work. If my company didn't present me with my check every payday on time or if I had to suffer the humiliation of ASKING someone for it every payday, I would soon send my resume out to similar companies. On a purely professional basis, in a job situation, how many of us would do the same? We do lots of things for Jesus, but as laypeople we usually have the security of a job or at least unemployment insurance behind us. How much difference does that make in the security of our lives?

My co-facilitator for the workshop, Jack Hubbs, and I worked out a list of

duties we thought most congregations expect of a pastor. We computed that on an hourly basis. First we set an hypothetical situation of a church with approximately 50 members, with one exhorter and one deacon on staff. Our list of the pastor's duties included preaching (including preparation and research), counseling (both church members and the general community), administration, Christian Education programs (including preparation), community involvement with other churches and the gay community, church social events, home and hospital visits, Fellowship and district business, church committees, board meetings, staff meetings, exhorter and deacon training, planning and conducting worship services, general cleanup of the office (who else is going to do it?) and personal education. The work week averaged 94 hours! Computed on a salary of \$600 per month, this professional minister, pastor of a church with extensive education and training is only earning \$1.60 an hour! This wage is not only below most states' minimums but is poverty level.

When we went through the same process of putting together a schedule and computing the pay at the workshop itself, the objection arose that ministers aren't in this business for the money and it is not JUST a profession. Yet, we expect our ministers to go through a very intense credentialing process and have very, very professional qualifications. Many pulpit committees send out questionnaires to churches requesting applicants to have graduate degrees. They often don't consider that the salary they are offering does not compare with what a Masters or Doctorate degree earns on the open job market. We also assume that our pastor will either get a second job (when?) if money is low or that the spouse will make up the difference.

Our churches have many priorities and expenses. Most of them are not rich. Yet the questions remain: are we really good stewards? Do we care about the comforts and security of the professional ministers in UFMCC?

The next step is to explore the "fringe benefits" of the job. I work in a high pressure job and put in long hours, yet I usually try to take weekends off. I especially save Sunday for church activities. Yet 46% of the ministers surveyed take only one day off a week. 35% take no vacation and the same percentage takes two weeks (18% take one week, 5% three or more weeks). It is our responsibility as members of the church to make sure our pastor is able to take time off and that

responsibilities are covered so that it can happen.

The subject gets more complicated in the care and feeding of the emotions and spirituality of the clergy. 63% responded that their congregations did not support them emotionally as persons or seem to care about them. The little things that we all consider important, such as birthdays or anniversaries, are also important to ministers. Only 40% of their congregations remember their birthdays and 46% the anniversary of their installation as pastor. The latter is the more astounding to me. We call a professional minister to lead us, plan an important installation service with many invited dignitaries, and then forget it happened. Birthdays have been with us all our lives as days to celebrate our personhood. We celebrate Christ's birthday with even more holiday spirit than Christ's Resurrection (certainly a more important event in the church calendar). How many of us even know our pastor's birthday?

The spiritual feeding of our clergy reminds me of a small ballet company with whom I used to work. Soloists would be hired for the company (which was not very professional in stature). Their dual job would be to perform the leading roles and to instruct the younger company members. To keep in shape and continue their training, the soloists had to either go elsewhere (not considered kosher) or try to exercise on their own -- alone.

The parallel to ministers is frighteningly close. 68% of them find their spiritual food outside their own congregation. On whether the congregation ministered to their professional ministers as much as they were ministered to, 1/3 of the clergy felt the covenant with their congregation was equal, 1/3 felt a few people ministered to them and 1/3 felt no one in their congregation ministered to them. Overall, 66% felt they were not sufficiently ministered to.

The individual "irritants and expectations" section opened a Pandora's box. It was so difficult to group the responses together that I simply typed a list of the clergy's comments and handed them out to the workshop participants. I could not have been more eloquent than the ministers themselves.

How many of us distract our pastor with such irritating habits as "wanting to discuss things or rap before or after services and during social times" or "expecting counseling on Sundays?" We expect our pastor to preach a brilliant sermon and meet and greet each and every one of us, yet we distract them constantly and don't allow this to happen. Professional minis-

ters keep office hours just as laypersons keep a regular schedule of work or school time. How often do we violate the minister's time off, home life, or already structured activities such as church worship time?

Our expectations of the clergy are high. Their reactions to that ranged widely. "Is it MY responsibility to build the church alone?" "Must I be joyful, happy, positive, holy at all times so that they can feel safe and saved?" "People only want me to preach what makes them feel good." "They don't share their joys with me -- but always their problems." And finally, a very telling, "They ask me to make sacrifices they aren't willing to make."

We assume that ministers are super-human persons and that the grace of God will automatically see them through every situation -- no matter how much responsibility and expectation we place on their shoulders. We often forget that professional ministers are people -- with human needs, cares, and concerns. We try to make them stay up on a pedestal and interpret God for us in an agreeable way so that we don't have to be challenged.

Ministers eat, go to the bathroom and sleep. They have many other personal needs to be fulfilled. Can we claim to minister to humanity and give the clergy "humanity-exempt" status? If their private sex lives don't fit our ideal of the person we've put on that pedestal, is it any of our business? Who are we to throw stones? If a pastor is single and sexually active we are jealous and critical; if a pastor is with a spouse, that spouse lives in a fishbowl and is constantly scrutinized. We of all churches should understand sexual activity and be tolerant.

Another area of concern to ministers was encouraging and supporting a professional minister's right to continue their education while serving the congregation. We want the best-trained pastor possible. It can only be to our advantage for our clergy to continue their education. Yet many people see this as time taken away from the church. They feel they shouldn't support it and that it should only be done on the clergy's "free time." What "free time?" The more the clergy can learn about people and God, the more they can teach us. They really shouldn't have to pay for it -- emotionally or financially.

God does call certain persons to follow a difficult path in the professional ministry and they aren't doing it for the prestige of wearing a collar or standing in a pulpit on Sunday. I praise God for giving these people the strength and sensitivity to

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I was born on January 3, 1934 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, of Cherokee, Creke and Irish parents with a Judaic and Christian family background which in itself makes for much controversy and conflict in one's life. I became aware of being a lesbian, or at least having lesbian tendencies, at the age of 12 and pursued those tendencies with a vengeance throughout junior and senior high school much to the chagrin, and I think amusement, of my teachers and friends in Bristow, Oklahoma, which was a small town of about 6,000.

I am sure in retrospect that I was a subject of concern for many mothers and fathers during those years, as I, in complete ignorant bliss, did what was for me quite natural in pursuing and having many dates with many of my female peers. It was not until I joined the Navy and served in that service for two years that I discovered that there were many other women such as myself and that there was even a name for us. My coming out years and dealing with my sexuality were difficult ones and I ask you to remember that this was in the 50's. By the mid 60's, I had acclimated myself to my sexuality and had relocated in San Francisco where I lived for many years. During that time, I was at one point a Catholic and at another point returned to my Jewish heritage and became a Reformed Jew.

In 1966 I finally came face to face with my inability to continue leading a double life as far as my family was concerned. I had actually been married on two different occasions to gay male friends in an attempt to satisfy the social needs that my mother had for having a happily married daughter. She had a gay married daughter but never a happily married one. Both marriages ended in divorce. I decided to come out to my mother and my brother (my natural father died when I was 10) and take the approach that they would have to deal with me as I was or I would have to become without family. The burden of dealing with that decision was probably one of the most painful that I have even gone through.

Trying to hide my sexuality both professionally and personally had led me to taking drugs in the mid 50's when it was not an "in" thing to do. I worked in the medical profession and had easy access to "uppers." Finding myself addicted to amphetamines, I realized that my whole life was going down the drain and that the main reason for all of it was my inability to lovingly share who I really was with those I was closest to. After a family

clergy corner

By Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey

conference where I explained who and what I was, the three of us shared a great deal of pain, but also a tremendous amount of love for one another. The support system which I had needed for so long, began to take shape. I hospitalized myself for five days and withdrew from drugs completely and have remained drug free for over 13 years now. Praise God!

Once the fear of my family knowing that I was gay was no longer a problem, I found myself coming out more and more to my professional friends and in turn their acceptance helped me to deal with myself. Unfortunately, God had had little part in my life because I had, quite frankly, made the mistake that many gay people make. I blamed God for my condition instead of praising God for it. I felt as though this Jesus that everyone talked about could not possibly have been the Messiah, for I felt that the Messiah would lovingly accept me just as I was and it had been drilled into me my entire life that Jesus Christ did not love me and that my being an acceptable child of God was of course, an impossibility.

In 1971 I moved back to Oklahoma and opened a gay bar called "The House of Twelve." I had never been in a private business enterprise before and the gay bar business was not the best of choices for my first and I might add, my last. It was during the eight months that I had my bar that I learned about MCC. On numerous occasions people would ask permission to put up posters announcing the meeting places for a small group of Christians who were meeting together in an effort to begin an MCC. My response to them was, that they could NOT put their posters up in my bar because 1. I was a Jew and 2. I was the owner of the bar and their posters offended me. I was convinced that the whole thing was some kind of a plot to again abuse gay people and an attempt to change them and in turn humiliate them.

Even at the urgings of friends I respected, I maintained this attitude.

Then my lover at the time, heard of the Rite of Holy Union that was being performed through this now established church. She and I had long wanted some sort of formalization of our relationship. When I was told that I would have to attend their church services three Sundays in a row before the ceremony could be performed, I thought this too was a clever way of getting money and of trying to brainwash people in the process. But, I loved this woman and since the Holy Union was important to her, I agreed to go to the services and to the required counseling.

On the day that I made this decision my lover and I had gone to another bar in town and during the time we were there, a tornado hit causing a power black out. The owner put candles on the tables and for some unknown reason, in the dark recess of my memory, a Christian hymn came to my mind and I began singing. Amazingly enough, other voices joined in and we went from hymn to hymn to hymn. During this singing, a heavy hand came down on my shoulder and I found myself looking into the face of an older attractive man who said, "We could use a good baritone in our church choir." He was the Rev. Bob Falls who had just been appointed worship coordinator of the mission group. I was embarrassed since I had just talked to him on the phone to make arrangements for our counselling and I had not been the politest of women to him. But there was something about him that made me anxious for that first counselling session. To make a very long and drawn out story shorter for you, we attended this counselling and we attended the church. We had our Holy Union and I professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour on August 19, 1972. MCC became a very important part of my life from then on. I knew that God had called me to the ministry.

I had known that as a very young woman in that little town of Bristow when a Presbyterian minister invited me to participate in their youth week and I did so because all of my friends went there. There were many summer youth programs at the churches but because the woman I was interested in at the time attended the Presbyterian Church, that's where I went.

After I finished my five minute talk, the minister said, "I know that you're not Christian, but I also know that the Lord has marked you and that you will be a

Christian and that some day you will be a minister and I don't know how and I don't know where, since right now that's an impossibility for women. But, I strongly feel that you will be in the Lord's service some day." He gave me a book which I still have. I was 14 at the time.

I served Christ the King MCC, Oklahoma City as a deacon, as its first exhorter and then as its worship coordinator and finally as its pastor. I was there nearly three years.

After pastoring there, I became pastor of MCC, Houston, Texas. In Houston I experienced homophobia at probably its worst. The notorious multiple killing of young men was still very much in the mind of Houstonians when I arrived. The Klu Klux Klan, for the first time in my life, became a reality and not just caricatures in a grade B 1940's movie. But God wanted that church to thrive and thrive it did and it became a viable part of the gay community. In 1978 I knew that God had

used me to do all that I was called to do in Houston and I began to seek what God's will was for the rest of my ministry.

It was at this time that I received calls from the Atlanta, Georgia church and the Los Angeles MCC. After candidating in L.A. I returned home to await their decision. When that decision came, I accepted with a great deal of fear. I have now pastored the L.A. church for nearly two years and it has been the greatest challenge of my ministry. To pastor a church where everyone said no woman could, has been both a blessing and at times a curse, but it has been a joy as well as a challenge to deal with a church that was the founding church of this Fellowship. It is the church whose original by-laws became the first by-laws of the fellowship; a church that has been at the forefront of many changes within our Fellowship. It has been a growing and positive experience for me. It has caused me to stretch and to grow to my maximum capabilities. It has also given me a great deal of love and a great deal of warmth.

At the General Conference in 1979, when the time came for the voting of elders I was in a peaceful place. I was convinced that I would not be elected and that I had done what I felt God had wanted me to do by accepting the nomination and that would be the end of that. Four agonizing ballots later, I had to deal with a whole new set of things that God was calling me to do.

I do that as my newest challenge in my ministry to a pastorate that now includes thousands. It is exciting to be a part of a group of people who will help to set the goals for the 80's so that we might claim them as ours. I feel that we have been called at this time and in this place to take the true word of God and the real message of the love of Jesus Christ to every person that we can. I feel that our enemies are going to lose the battle and I believe that MCC is going to carry the banner of Jesus Christ in the 80's and I believe that we, as gay Christians, will exemplify the real love of God in every nation.

We have within our Fellowship some of the most talented and dedicated lay people in the world. Lay people who have the ability to present the word of God through their many and varied talents. We must begin to utilize those talents in every church, in every commission, in every committee.

It is our God that we serve, it is our talents that we give, it is our 1980's if we'll claim it.



Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey, pastor of MCC Los Angeles

CON

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NASHVILLE - A gay rights group at Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee has been recognized as an official student organization.

Until the recent court ruling, the Board of Regents and other university officials had denied the group official status.

SAN FRANCISCO - A march was recently held here to commemorate the deaths of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. Marchers carried lighted candles and were led by the new Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

MINNEAPOLIS - The American Lutheran Church has proposed a new set of guidelines for adoption. They say, "Participation in homosexual activity or promotion of such activity" are ruled out for ministers. Action on the proposal will take place at the Church Council Meeting this year.

The President's mother, Lillian Carter, helped the Los Angeles gay community raise \$120,000. When asked if she felt embarrassed about helping the gay community she said, "No, not at all. Is that what this is?"

The 1980 Census Questionnaire will no longer refer to "head of household." Instead, the categories "partner" and "roommate" have been added and the pronoun "he" has been substituted with "person."

COLORADO SPRINGS - Flyers which read "Death to the Homos" have been circulated on buses and in churches. The flyers are signed THEM (The Homosexual Extermination Movement).

PHILADELPHIA - A Roman Catholic priest and Philadelphian Archdiocesan spokesperson against gay rights was arrested in New Orleans for attempting sodomy. Allegedly he propositioned an undercover male vice squad officer in a porno bookstore. Using a false name he spent three nights in jail.

BOSTON - *The Boston Globe* had numerous protests regarding their allegedly inaccurate reporting on the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Because of these protests the *Globe* has appointed a liaison to the gay community.

The *Globe* reported there were 25,000 participants in the March. Accusations were also made that the newspaper frequently underplays or censors positive things about the gay community.

NEW YORK - An unofficial paper issued by representatives of the Lutheran Church in the U.S. states that "a person's sexual orientation, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is neither cause for nor against acceptance" in the ministry.

The report goes on to say however that sexual activity must be "in the context of the covenant of heterosexual marriage."

WATERTOWN, NEW YORK - The Watertown Gay Task Force has met with opposition following its formation. Rev. Dan Lovely of the Watertown Baptist Temple has posted signs in front of his church which read, "God Says Death to Homos" and "1 Mile to Sodom-town."

Following his campaign, harassment, death threats, beatings, and fire bombings have been directed against the task force.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The International Gay Association has opened an office in Washington. The Association represents lesbian and gay organizations in 20 countries.

The liaison office will help inform Americans about conditions of gay communities in other parts of the world.

CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA - Famous heart surgeon Dr. Christian Barnard has spoken in favor of gay rights according to the *Gay News* in London.

It was reported that he said homosexuality is not a sickness or something to be cured.

ANDERSON, INDIANA - The Church of God with a membership of 170,000 has decided that homosexuality is not "normal, desirable, or Christian."

SAN FRANCISCO - Sixteen gay men and lesbians were recently inducted into the San Francisco Police Department.

The nine gay men and seven lesbians are in a group of 190 candidates scheduled to start training in the next several months.

by R. Adam DeBaugh

Heavy lobbying and constituent pressure has paid off in the House of Representatives as the 52nd co-sponsor was added to the national Gay civil rights bill, H.R. 2074.

At the beginning of 1979, Steven Endean of the Gay Rights National Lobby and Adam DeBaugh of the UFMCC Washington Field Office agreed on a goal for this Congress of 50 co-sponsors for the Gay rights bill. Now, with over half the 96th Congress still ahead of us, we have 52 co-sponsors, the highest number ever listed on a Gay rights bill in the U.S. Congress.

H.R. 2074 would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act, adding the words "affectional or sexual orientation" to the lists of human conditions for which discrimination is prohibited. It covers public facilities, federally assisted opportunities, employment and housing.

The new co-sponsors include Rep. Edward R. Roybal of California, Rep. Bob Carr of Michigan, Rep. Robert Duncan of Oregon, Rep. Richard Nolan of Minnesota, Rep. Leon E. Panetta of California, and Rep. James C. Corman of California. All six are Democrats. A complete list of co-sponsors is found at the end of this article.

One of the co-sponsors listed is Rep. Abner Mikva of Illinois, who has left the House of Representatives to take a federal judgeship. His seat will be filled after a primary on December 11 and a special election on January 22, 1980. Hopefully, Rep. Mikva's successor will also co-sponsor the Gay rights legislation, keeping the list of co-sponsors at 52.

Steve Endean, Executive Director of the Gay Rights National Lobby with whom the UFMCC Washington Office works very closely on legislation in Congress, told A New Day, "We are absolutely delighted at hitting the record number of Congressional co-sponsors for H.R. 2074. This is only one indication of the broad measure of support that there really is in the Congress for Gay rights legislation."

The 96th Congress continues throughout 1980, so there is plenty of time to add new co-sponsors to this important legislation. Have you written to your Congressperson about it yet? Please do so. The address is simply the Representative's name, House of Representatives Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. And please send a copy of your letter to UFMCC's Washington Office, Suite 210, 110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

(reprinted from A NEW DAY)

WASHINGTON - The word "men" will remain in the central prayers and liturgical rites of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Bishops voted down a proposal for inclusive language in reference to sexual gender.

Sister Mary O'Keefe of the National Association of Women Religious said that she would refuse to go to mass or take communion where they say "all men" in the prayer.

BOSTON - The cyanide poisoning of a *Gay Community News* journalist has been officially ruled suicide by coroner's officials.

David Brill, an investigative reporter, had received numerous threats on his life while investigating organized crime's involvement in murders within the gay community.

A Boston police officer was recently suspended for assaults on gay youth as a result of Brill's reporting.

The Women's Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, recently voted to not rehire Joan Clark, a lesbian who had been fired when she came out.

Earlier the National Council of Churches' Commission in Ministry had adopted a statement in support of Clark. They said they would continue to be in solidarity with her to combat homophobia in all churches.

ITALY - Fuori, Italy's gay rights organization has filed a defamation suit against the Pope, John Paul II, because of his statements made in Chicago condemning homosexual acts.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that a spokesperson for Fuori said they are suing because the Pope's statement causes considerable social, economic and cultural harm to homosexuals throughout the world.

The Disciples of Christ recently voted for a resolution to ordain homosexuals at their bi-annual convention in St. Louis, MO. At the same time, the church affirmed their stand against the ordination of homosexuals.

A report from the Church of England states that there can be justification in homosexual relationships and that gays should not be prohibited from entering the priesthood.

The report, which goes before the General Synod in 1981 was five years in the making.

There is now controversy on the report and its suggestions.

The recommendations are:

1. The church should recognize that it can be justifiable for individuals "to enter into a homosexual relationship involving the physical expression of free love."

2. The homosexual age of consent should be reduced from 21 to 18. (the age of consent for heterosexuals in Britain is 16).

3. A man should not be refused ordination because he is a homosexual.

4. A homosexual priest living openly with another man should turn in his resignation and the bishop would decide whether or not to accept it.

The Episcopal Church in the U.S. has decided that it is "not appropriate" to ordain a practicing homosexual and the Church of England concurs.

A task force in Denver which was created several months ago to investigate allegations that the police there were harassing gays has recommended the police force actively recruit homosexuals for the police force.

They claim this would help ease the tension between the gay community and the police.

Other recommendations were made to the Commission on Community Relations. They asked that laws used for harassment be studied and changed and a liaison person be appointed to improve communications.

CHICAGO - Delegates of the Chicago Teachers Union voted unanimously to endorse a proposed Gay Rights ordinance for Chicago.

The motion read: "Be it moved that Chicago Teachers Union supports the American Federation of Teachers' position on job discrimination as it would apply to any Chicago ordinance."

The AFT has endorsed employment rights of gay teachers since 1973.

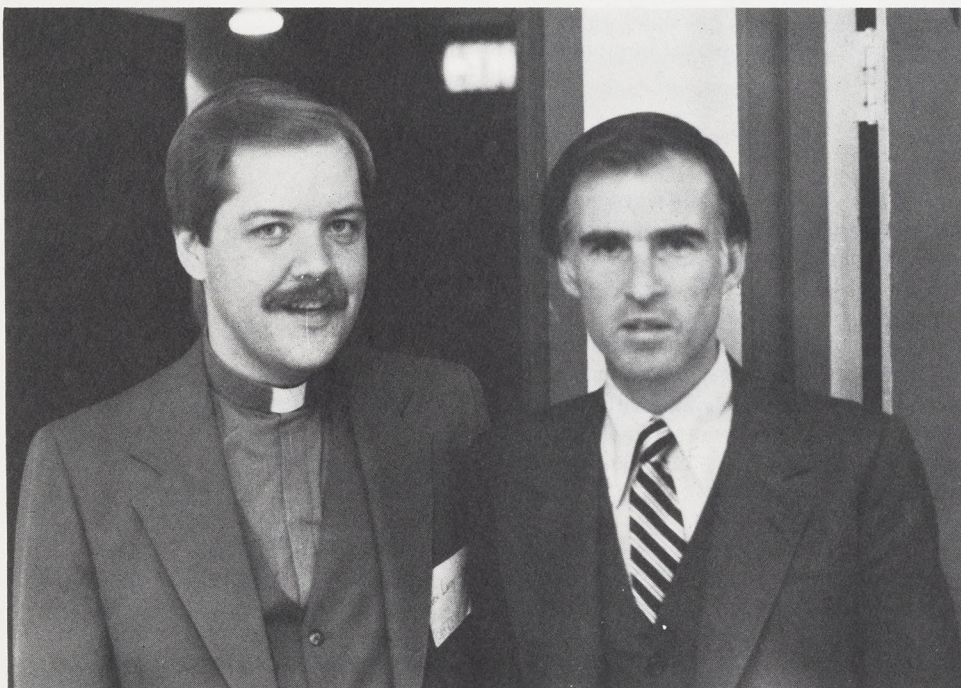
continued on page 14



NEW YORK - The movie *Cruising* continues to cause a controversy. Protestors of the film claim the movie shows that homosexuality and killing are related. The movie is scheduled to be released this month.

DALLAS - James Robison, a Southern Baptist evangelist had his weekly t.v. program cancelled by WFAA-TV in Dallas because of his anti-gay comments.

WOR-TV in New York, although airing his program, has bleeped his anti-gay remarks.



Rev. Larry Uhrig, pastor MCC Washington D.C. with Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. after a gay rights rally in Washington.

Gay activist Melodie Moorehead recently announced in Dade County, Florida, the formation of the Eleanor Roosevelt Full Equality Committee.

The newly formed national group will be comprised of gay, bisexual and heterosexual women honoring the civil rights pioneer, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

The group promotes emotional and sexual equality as alternatives to sexism and homophobia.

Upfront reported that Moorehead got the idea for the group when it was reported that Eleanor Roosevelt had intimate correspondence with Lorena Hickok.

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY - Homosexual teenagers who need foster homes have been placed with lesbian parents. The *New York Times* reported that the New Jersey Department of Human Services has placed five to 10 gay teens in the last four years. Before placing the teenagers, the natural parent must approve.

No teenagers have been placed in homes headed by gay men.

A gay man has been awarded custody of his two children in what is believed to be the first victory of its kind in Kansas. He was openly supported by two friends with the MCC Joplin church.

SCOTLAND - The Church of Scotland has decided to allow men into its diaconate. Until now, only women were allowed to serve in this capacity.

The deaconesses have been employed in local parishes to visit the sick, do youth work and participate in educational and social welfare work. Male deacons will now undergo training for diaconal work at St. Colm's College in Edinburgh.

For the last 10 years women have been admitted to its ordained ministry.

The police chiefs of Portland, Oregon, and San Diego, California, recently invited gay persons to apply for jobs in their respective police departments joining a growing list of cities throughout the nation who no longer discriminate against applicants because of their sexual orientation.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - According to UPI, White House aides told representatives from the National Gay Task Force that the Administration is considering an executive order to ban discrimination against homosexuals in the federal government.

The aides also said they will intervene with the Federal Bureau of Prisoners to try to stop a ban which prohibits holding worship services for homosexuals.

The NGTF also presented 51,000 signatures petitioning the president to extend the provisions of the civil rights acts to homosexuals. President Carter did not attend the meeting.

During a gay rights rally in Washington D.C., Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. reaffirmed his position regarding gay rights.

In his keynote address Brown said that he would fight for a gay rights plank in the Democratic Party and if elected would sign an executive order banning discrimination based on sexual preference in the federal government.

President Jimmy Carter and Senator Edward Kennedy did not appear but sent staff members to represent them.

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IN UNITY**

FELLOWSHIP FLASHES

MINISTERIAL AND FELLOWSHIP CHANGES: REV. STAN HARRIS from Baltimore, MD to Auckland, New Zealand . . . REV. DAVID KROMER also from Baltimore, is waiting for a visa to go to Auckland with Rev. Harris . . . REV. KEITH SPARE was appointed to the staff of MCC of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, MO . . . REV. LEE CARLTON from Jacksonville, FL to Alpha and Omega, Brooklyn, NY . . . REV. MARGE RAGONA is now interim pastor of MCC Ventura, CA . . . REV. RICHARD PLOEN has returned to the staff at Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana, CA . . . REV. BONNIE DANIEL from Anaheim, CA to MCC Bakersfield, CA . . . REV. RON PANNELL from New Orleans, LA to MCC Baltimore, MD . . . JEAN GRALLEY (Office of Lay Concerns) moved from Los Angeles, CA to Detroit, MI . . . REV. GEORGE COVINGTON from Ft. Meyers, FL, is the new assistant pastor of MCC Los Angeles, CA . . . JOHANNES KUIPER, former worship coordinator of Good News MCC, Albany, NY is the new worship coordinator of MCC Worcester, MA . . . REV. GEORGE McDERMOTT from Indianapolis, IN is the new pastor of MCC Providence, RI . . . REV. BRENDA CISNEROS - HUNT from St. Paul, MN, is the new pastor of MCC Detroit, MI . . . REV. VALERIE BOUCHARD was ordained to a lifetime ministry in UFMCC . . . REV. BOB JONES from MCC Syracuse, NY to the staff of MCC New York.

reaction '80:

Dear Fellowship Family,

Happy New Year to all from the tiny flock in Tallahassee. The Lord has been so very good to us during this Advent Season that we've been spending far more time offering thanks than we have in asking for help.

The overview you get from the monthly reports is limited in that it obscures what is really happening here. I would like to translate those cold, impersonal statistics into something a bit more meaningful. December 1979 we experienced the lowest attendance in our stormy three-year history, yet, we record the second highest offering in three years.

In addition to receiving one new member in December, we had two people return, after an absence of two months. Some, who could not invest their presence, have nevertheless remembered to invest their gifts. Praise the Lord. I have every reason to believe that the trend will reverse itself. The hunger for the Lord is always stronger than the fear of societal pressure.

We are not content to merely wait, and do nothing. We have begun a Bar ministry -- have a colorful poster, prominently displayed, inviting all to join us for Bible Study, Covered Dish Supper and Rap Session, and our Worship Service. We expect to produce a monthly Newsletter in the near future that will be distributed in the bar and on the FSU campus. Our active few are doing some personal witnessing, and report interest among their friends.

The going is slow, but the path is so clearly marked, and how do we feel your prayers, and the prayers of others. Jim Lewey writes from San Antonio that his flock has chosen our congregation as their congregation-of-the-month in their special prayers. MCC Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami Beach, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Pensacola have all offered encouragement. The difficulty we have experienced has served to unify us on both District and Fellowship level in a way that nothing else could accomplish. It has dissolved that feeling of isolation, as uplifting letters dissolve the miles that separate us from others in the Family of God.

Expectations soar as we make plans for The Evangelistic Team in March, The March on Tallahassee, and Troy's visit in April, and The Long Trek from Jacksonville to Tallahassee across hostile northern Florida. Too, we will host a District-wide Professional Conference February 14 - 16th. Then there is District Conference, and the Spiritual feeding and fellowship that always offers. The title of last night's sermon, "The Acceptable Year" is our launch-pad into the new decade. We declare that we will do all in our power to make 1980 "The Acceptable Year." Though we are few, we are very spiritually healthy. The Lord will provide for our needs, and direct our growth. We urge you to keep us in your prayers.

Love,
Bob Angell
Worship Coordinator MCC Tallahassee

Ms. Birdie Says:

KIDS COUNT!

Do You Have A Sunday School?

Do You Have A Children's Time During Service?

Do You Have A Youth Program?

Do You Have Kids In Church?



Ms. Birdie, who did the children's sermon at General Conference, thinks these are important questions. If you have materials aimed at the youth of UFMCC, the Christian Education Department would appreciate copies to be made available to all of our churches. WE CARE.

Brought To You By
THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF UFMCC

Mojica Viajará a Sur América

NOTA DEL EDITOR: Esta es la primera vez que In Unity publica un artículo en inglés y en español.

Por la gracia de Dios he sido escogido como coordinador del Distrito Hispano de las Américas. Mientras esto sucedía en Los Angeles Dios estaba trabajando en mi en New York. Y para el tiempo que se hizo público mi nombramiento ya yo estaba haciendo planes para venirme a vivir a Los Angeles.

Desde que llegué aquí he visto la mano de Dios en diferentes aspectos de mi vida.

Mojica to travel to S.America

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first time In Unity has run an article in both English and Spanish.

I have been appointed coordinator of the Hispanic America District. While the Board of Elders was working on the creation of this new district, the Lord was working with me. By the time the announcement was public I was getting ready to move to Los Angeles.

Since I arrived in Los Angeles, I have been able to see God working in my life in different ways.

Right now I'm working on the package that I will take with me in my missionary trip to South America. As you all know, the Fellowship's material is in English so I have to translate everything into Spanish. This task takes quite a bit of time. It's for this reason that I have to postpone my trip until mid February.

The package will include: The Fellowship Today, the By-laws, Troy's book *The Lord is My Shepherd and Knows I'm Gay* and *El Homosexual y la Biblia* (The Homosexual and the Bible) written by me.

While I get ready to go I am getting familiar with Los Angeles, its people and customs, because as soon as I get back to L.A. I will start working in the founding of the MCC Latina de Los Angeles. I want to bring all the Spanish speaking gay people to Christ and MCC.

In my missionary trip I will visit in Brazil: Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre. Also, I will go to Miami Beach, Florida, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador and possibly Argentina.

The time has come to raise the consciousness of MCC so in one way or another they help to reach the Spanish speaking

Actualmente estoy preparando el material que he de llevar conmigo en mi viaje misionero a Sur América. Como todo el material que la Fraternidad tiene es en inglés tengo que ir traduciendo al español. Y como es sabido esto toma algo de tiempo, por lo cual he tenido que posponer el viaje hasta mediados del mes de febrero.

El material que pienso llevarme es el siguiente: La Fraternidad al Día, el Reglamento, el libro de Troy Perry, *El Señor es mi Pastor* y sabe que soy Homosexual, y *El Homosexual y la Biblia* el cual es escrito por mi.

gay community with the news that God loves them and died for them also, so we all can be one in Christ Jesus enjoying His fellowship. There will be articles in Spanish in *In Unity* and *Keeping in Touch* will be printed in Spanish to keep the community informed of what is going on in the Fellowship and the Hispanic America District.

Help us by praying and by sending your tax deductible offerings to this so important ministry to the Fellowship Office.

Your Co-servant,
Rev. Jose L. Mojica

MCC to begin in Denmark

By Rev. Elder Jean White

This is an exciting time to be in Europe! To be able to testify to the saving grace of God for all people in Scandinavia. For a long time we have been praying for an opening in Europe and at last the tide seems to be turning. The day before I left London to attend the Board of Elders' meeting in Los Angeles, the telephone rang -- Rev. Bjorn Marcusson from Copenhagen was on the other end, with exciting news -- my trip in December to Denmark had borne fruit. The Danish group will be applying for study group status. They have translated the by-laws into Danish and spent several evenings studying them. The result being they want to join the Fellowship. More than that, Rev. Marcusson informed me that there is a group in Uppsala, Sweden who are also very interested. Another group of people in Malmo, Sweden want to start holding a monthly communion service to begin with.

Mientras tanto me voy familiarizando con Los Angeles, su gente y costumbres. Porque tan pronto regrese de mi viaje misionero me dedicaré a conquistar el pueblo hispano-parlante de Los Angeles para Cristo y la Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana.

En mi viaje misionero no solo visitare São Paulo en Brasil, también tengo en el itinerario a Miami Beach, Florida, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, posiblemente Argentina y otras ciudades del Brasil.

La hora ha llegado de despertar la conciencia de todo miembro de la Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana para que en una forma u otra ayuden a llevar el mensaje del amor de Cristo a toda la comunidad gay hispana del mundo. Con este objetivo irán apareciendo artículos en español en *In Unity*. Y se publicará "Keeping In Touch" en español para mantener a los hispanos al día de los acontecimientos tanto de la Fraternidad como del distrito.

Ayúdenos orando y enviando sus ofrendas, que son deductibles de sus impuestos, a este ministerio tan importante a la oficina de la Fraternidad.

Su Co-siervo,
Rev. José L. Mojica

Then, wonder of wonders. I was asked if there was any possibility of Rev. Perry visiting Scandinavia for two days during his trip to Britain in May. They have permission to use a large church and social hall for the occasion and they would be willing to pay Rev. Perry's boat fare from London. Who knows where this may lead! The vision is there and we must help our brothers and sisters to fulfill it.

It's an exciting time to be in Europe!

ATTENTION

Rev. Donald Eastman, chair of the Commission on Government Structures and Systems, has announced that the Commission will meet June 12-15, 1980 in Toronto, Ontario. Details will be forthcoming.

Members of the Commission include district coordinators, district lay representatives and other appointed members.

Hispanic Americas ministry to reach out

By Jose A. Cruz

Yes, there is a possibility that we will be able to have an MCC in Puerto Rico or rather an ICM, yes, because once this Fellowship starts expanding itself into non English speaking countries MCC will have as many names as languages its congregations speak. That's right, Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana is in the process of being registered as a church in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

It's funny but sometimes what you say most fervently that you won't do is what you wind up doing. During General Conference in Los Angeles several people asked me if we were going to start something in San Juan, P.R. I answered them, "No way." If someone else wants to start it fine. I'll pray for it, but that's as far as I am going. And believe me, I had very good reasons for saying so. When you have been a politician on an island 100 miles long by 35 miles wide people get to know you, and the image most of them have of me is that of a devoted husband and government official. It's difficult to break away from people's conception of one's self and especially in politics, you tend to keep the "best" image possible.

Anyway, at the end of October the Northeast District held its fall District Conference and I was there, without legal standing, but enjoying the fellowship of my brothers and sisters. During a Coffee House that the Conference had, my mind wandered away and I found myself inside an old movie house in my hometown, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, figuring out how to put up an altar on the stage, and devising ways of transforming the old movie house into a church. I then said to myself again, "No way" I'm not going there, but apparently God had different plans. The next day, when I was giving MCC Hispana's last report in the Northeast District I decided to tell people of the possibility of me going to Puerto Rico. I am not a person given to cry, but believe me, I did. There and then I came to the realization of the true meaning of a prophecy given to me through my ex-wife two years ago that in essence said, 'Go and minister to your own.'

The next thing I know I'm on my way to Puerto Rico, after asking Adam De Baugh of UFMCC's Washington Field Office to find out the procedures for establishing a church in Puerto Rico. When I got there it seemed like people were

ready, both gay and non-gay. Some of them had been my classmates all through my school years and they were encouraging me. There and then my decision became final, I would be a pioneer. I would start ICM in Puerto Rico, not in San Juan like everyone expected, but in Arecibo, a city of only 100,000 inhabitants, not as a church for gay people, but as a church for ALL people.

I know that by now you will be thinking where are we going to meet? Well, it so happens that in my home town there is this old lighthouse that has been abandoned for years, a big three story building in a place where it can be seen from most parts of town. In old days the lighthouse would light the bay of Arecibo. Who knows if in the future it will bring the Light of Salvation and Hope to the oppressed and the abandoned. Oh, yes, and how do you get it? Good question. Here I go again. Seems like I am want to ensure that Adam DeBaugh earns his keep. I requested him to contact the Coast Guard and the General Services Administration, in the hope that Uncle Sam will let us use it. Please pray for it. And, who knows, Lighthouse MCC or Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana El Faro might very soon be a reality.

Aha! You thought you were going to go free without reading it, but you are wrong. As always what preacher doesn't ask for money? So here I go, for all those of you who would like to see this dream come true, there is a way of doing it. Send your contributions to UFMCC, Attention: Fellowship Treasurer, marked for the Hispanic Americas Ministry. You know something? If we get the lighthouse it would mean that new doors would have to be installed, windows would have to be replaced, electrical installation would have to be replaced, the building would have to be repainted and, of course, telephone, electricity and water mains would have to be reconnected. Who can ever escape money? Seems like for everything except salvation it's needed. Help me bring hope to the oppressed Lesbians and Gays in Puerto Rico. Let me bring hope to the non-gay that for one reason or another cannot find themselves comfortable in mainline churches. Let me show them the way to Salvation, Liberation and Self Esteem.



WORLD CHURCH EXTENSION

(Fill Out And Return Today)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

I Will Remember To Pray For The World Church Extension In The 1980's



Enclosed Is My Contribution Of \$ _____ To
The World Church Extension Fund

Enclosed Is My Special Donation \$ _____ For



VAN FUND



HISPANIC MINISTRY



NEW ZEALAND

My Pledge For 1980 Is \$ _____ Per Month Total

THE 80's ARE OURS!

fellowship family



QUINCY, ILLINOIS

MCC Illiano sent seven members to Northeast Missouri State University to speak to a mental hygiene class about homosexuality as a lifestyle.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Metropolitan Community Church's northern California Prison Ministry is now holding meetings with gay prisoners at Vacaville's Correctional Medical Facility.

Prisoners at Vacaville say there is a large gay population at Vacaville.

MCC began holding meetings on a weekly basis in response to requests from prisoners there.

The administration at Vacaville has been cooperative in permitting MCC to meet with gay prisoners there.

This weekly meeting is only the first step in trying to meet the needs of gay prisoners there and establishing a regular liaison between gays on the "outside" and "inside."

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

MCC Syracuse joined Grace Episcopal Church, where they are housed, in welcoming Grace Episcopal's new rector. They also held a joint Candlelight Christmas Eve Service.

MCC Syracuse celebrated its third anniversary.

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Fourteen members of MCC Sarasota recently participated in a radio series on Gay Lifestyles which was aired on WQSA. Included were couples, gays, non-gays, parents of gays and women and men.

The speakers bureau there has been especially active in recent months speaking to colleges and the Police Academy.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

MCC San Francisco's weekly radio broadcast "JUST AS I AM" continues on the religious station KFAQ. A local "ex-gay" Christian group is leading an assault on the program, along with other broadcasters on KFAQ. A letter-writing campaign urges KFAQ to cancel the

program, which the station has indicated it does not wish to do. Other programming is being cancelled as broadcasters boycott KFAQ for its stand. But the campaign is beginning to backfire as some churches and ministers receiving the anti-MCC letters write to KFAQ supporting MCC and criticizing the attempt to abridge the freedom to broadcast. Best of all, people continue to call thanking MCC San Francisco for being there for those who are alone and need the support of knowing that God does love them.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Good Shepherd Parish MCC donated \$419 to help relieve hunger in Cambodia. The money was given to Orfam-America, a hunger relief organization.

The Church also gave a gift of \$100 to the financially troubled Church Federation of Greater Chicago. The major ministries of the Federation are a series of radio and television broadcasts focusing on human issues. Included in the broadcasts is the role of gays in church and society.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES

NORTHWEST

People are still talking about NW District Conference that was held in November 1979 at the Portland Church.

Prior to opening day, the ministers and their spouses were taken on a tour of Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Highway. The day culminated in an Open House at the home of the District Coordinator, the Rev. A. Austin Amerine.

Opening night of the Conference included the presentation of ESTHER THE QUEEN, A TIMELESS STORY. The musical score and lyrics were composed by Jack St. John, an exhorter in the Portland Church. The narration was written and delivered by Paula Nielsen. Rev. Michael England of MCC - San Francisco wrote:

"We have been borrowing other people's music . . . ESTHER THE QUEEN was not only very definitely an outgrowth of our special mission and experience, but as music I found it rich and subtle and very, very moving. . . . It makes me proud to know that we are composing in UFMCC and that we can give our work to the Christian Church."

Speakers at the conference were: The Rev. Beau J. McDaniels of MCC, Monterey, California, The Rev. Jim N. Dykes of MCC - San Francisco, The Rev. David Gunton of MCC Vancouver, BC (District Coordinator - Canadian District); and The Rev. Elder

Freda Smith of MCC - Sacramento.

The theme of the Conference was "Building Positive Images." There were two series of workshops; one on Achieving Positive Images, which included workshops on "Carton & Contents", "Behind The Masks" and "To Be Or Not To Be - Out"; the second series under the heading Projecting Positive Images, which included workshops on "Community Services" (A Panel Discussion); "Ecumenical Doorways" and "Public Media Awareness." During the Saturday luncheon, "Darcelle" spoke on Roles and Images. "Darcelle" (Walter Cole) is the proprietor of Darcelle's, a nightclub in Portland which features female impersonators -- Darcelle appears in the show along with a group of entertainers.

At the business session, Rev. A. Austin Amerine was re-elected full-time District Coordinator for a three-year term; Rev. Claudia Vierra was re-elected as Assistant District Coordinator; Herm Mank was re-elected as District Treasurer; and Madeline Reed of MCC Sacramento was re-elected as District Clerk. A new role of "District Secretary" was created by removing the District Coordinator's reports and correspondence from the list of the Clerk's tasks. This position will be appointed by the District Coordinator.

The NW District is planning a Spring Camp Meeting/Retreat in June, 1980 in Northern California which will be for eight days.

PREVIOUS DENOMINATION OF CLERGY

Editor's Note: This does not include the newly licensed ministers.

Apostolic Church of Christ	1	
Assembly of God	6	
Baptist: Southern	14	
American	2	
National	1	
General	1	
Non-specific	11	
	Total	29
Christian Methodist Episcopal	1	
Christian Science	1	
Church of Christ	2	
Church of God	2	
Disciples of Christ	2	
Episcopal	6	
Anglican	2	
Evangelical Brethren	1	
Evangelical and Reformed	1	
Four-Square Gospel	3	
Gospel Fellowship Association	1	
Jehovah's Witness	1	
Jewish	2	
Liberal Catholic Church	1	
Lutheran	5	
Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)	6	
Methodist: United	8	
Other	9	
	Total	17
Nazarene	2	
Non-denominational	3	
Orthodox (Bulgarian, Eastern)	2	
Presbyterian	11	
Reformed Church of America	1	
Roman Catholic	31	
Salvation Army	4	
Seventh-Day Adventist	3	
United Church of Christ	11	
United Pentecostal	3	
Universal World Church Fellowship	1	
No Information	1	

Compiled by Rev. Marge Ragona

A REMINDER - Proficiency exams will be given on Friday, March 21 and Saturday, March 22, 1980. The exam will be given in all districts in the U.S. and Canada.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

MCC Detroit recently installed their new pastor Brenda Cisneros - Hunt. Officiating at the installation was Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, former pastor of Detroit. There were 133 in attendance.

Participating at the worship service was Rev. Jay Deacon, District Coordinator

of the Great Lakes District, and Rev. Ted Richmond of MCC Ann Arbor.

Rev. Cisneros - Hunt moved to Detroit from St. Paul, MN with her spouse Rita Cisneros - Hunt.

Several members of MCC St. Paul attended the installation. A reception was held following the worship service.

As a special favor to Rev. Cisneros - Hunt Ms. Birdie gave the children's sermon.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On Christmas Eve, a member of Metropolitan Community Church of Washington, D.C., called the church office with a wondrous Christmas gift. "My father owns a greenhouse and has 250 poinsettia plants left over that he wants to give away. Will you take them?" And so . . . for its Midnight Service the sanctuary was a garden of red and white blooms, banked along the front of the altar among the ropes of fragrant greens and Christmas trees.

And Christmas Eve was only the beginning -- isn't it always? On Christmas Day 20 members together with members of the host 1st Congregational Church, served Christmas Dinner to about 250 homeless street people. And all who came left with a special Christmas gift -- a poinsettia of their choosing. New York Avenue Presbyterian Church carted away 100 of the plants to give to the elderly who they were serving dinner to.

And there's more -- isn't there always? The Christmas Dinners (and Thanksgiving Dinners, too) are just one of several programs that the Downtown Cluster of Congregations has developed to serve the poor, homeless and transient. MCC donates clothes and food to the Urban Ministries Center around the corner. Each Monday evening, MCC members serve dinner to more than 40 homeless women as staff of the Luther Place Overnight Shelter, one of the few places in town where women who wander the streets of the city can find a hot meal and a roof over their head. They sleep in a converted chapel, where the blankets are stored on the altar during the day. And this growing ministry of servanthood is opening other doors of cooperation among the downtown churches.

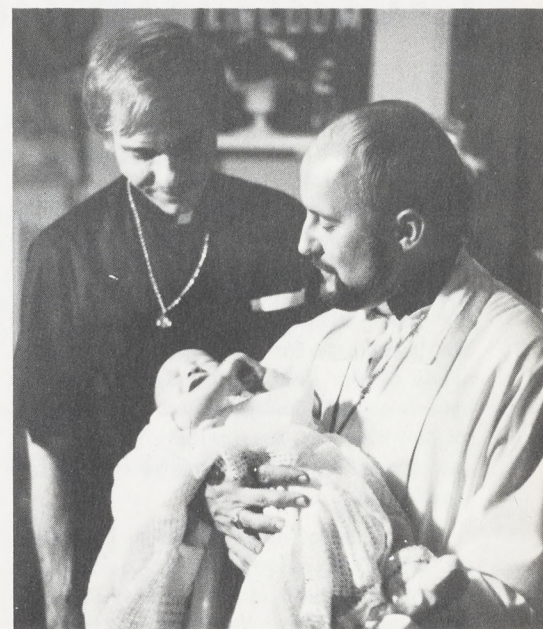
Because MCC is the only church in the downtown area open on Sunday afternoons, it is the sole source of assistance for those stranded at the nearby bus station -- the police know where to refer people these days. Even the bus station workers were fed Christmas dinner and took home a poinsettia. God's blessings are abundant!

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Baltimore's first baby; MCC Baltimore recently witnessed the baptism of their first baby. John David Lowry, named after Rev. Harris' middle name and Rev. Kromer's first name, was born on the second anniversary of their Holy Union. Ms. Lowry, a daughter of Deacon June ('my son's gay . . . and that's O.K.') and Jack Durham was several weeks overdue on the delivery, so a very concerned congregation held a special healing service to 'pray the baby along'. The following day, 8½ pound John David was born.

Rev. Harris had originally agreed to be a surrogate "father" to assist Lowry in natural childbirth, but the General Conference cut into the classes, so another was found. The entire congregation got actively involved in the birth of 'their' baby, and the chapel was packed to capacity for the baptism. A great cheer rang out when Rev. Harris declared, "Who said Gays don't have children? Anita, eat your heart out!!" Ms. Lowry was declared an 'honorary Gay' and John David was 'adopted' by the Church.

Rev. Harris has been appointed Coordinator for Church Extension in New Zealand, and Rev. Kromer as Pastor of MCC Auckland, New Zealand. They will take up their new duties in 1980. (The Rev. Ron Pannell has been elected the new Pastor of MCC Baltimore, to fill the vacancy left by Rev. Harris' appointment.)



Rev. David Kromer and Rev. Stan Harris (R) Auckland, New Zealand, baptize John David Lowry.

Will someone sign for me?

by Robbie Hamilton

I know a little silent lad
Who talks and hears with signs,
Whose sole communication
Is what the hand defines.
He only asks that folks around
Compassionate to be,
That he might take a little part
Of his society.

He tries to meet his creature needs:
Warm shelter and a bed -
Clean clothes; he seems so grateful
As he eats his daily bread.
He'd love to hear our laughter,
He cherishes our smiles,
He'd love to hear us tell him
That we understand his trials.

"Come, lad, we'll go to church today,
Where salvation is the key
To Heaven's glorious portals
Through the blood of Calvary."
Of course, the lad would love to go,
But his eyes hold forth the plea
As his challenge moves from hand to heart:
WILL SOMEONE SIGN FOR ME?

Oh, may I have a little part
In this child's destiny;
But for the precious grace of God
The deaf one could be me.
So may I meet the challenge

To change his outlook grim -
To open windows, doors, and worlds:
For I will sign for him!

Reprinted with permission from THE RANCH HAND, of the Bill Rice Ranch, Murfreesboro, TN, 37130. Submitted by Richard Roberts.

The above poem graphically illustrates one of the common needs of people in our community: deaf persons need an interpreter in order to worship with us. Any church that recognizes that need, and does nothing to fill it, is avoiding the mandate of Matthew 25:40: "When you do it to the least of these my brothers (or sisters), you do unto me."

As Christians, we need to give serious thought to those people in our communities who are part of "the least" to which Christ refers. And, we also need to give even more serious consideration to the situations in which they find themselves, and how we can reach out and touch their lives for Christ.

In that passage from Matthew, our Lord mentions six types of afflictions: hunger, thirst, being a stranger, nakedness, illness, and imprisonment. Jesus' message is clear: those who minister to those people, in so doing, were both assuring their own salvation and ministering to the

Lord as well, and would be rewarded with eternal life. Those who refused to minister, on the other hand, were rewarded with everlasting punishment.

In this world today, we have many types of afflictions. As a fellowship, we must become aware of our responsibility to these outcasts. As Christians, and as gays, we have been (and in some cases still are) outcasts. Can we dare turn our backs on other outcasts?

In an effort to deal with this situation, the Commission on Innovative Ministries has been restructured by the Board of Elders. It now covers 13 specialized ministries: ministry to the deaf, ministry to the blind, ministry to transsexual individuals, to transvestites, to aged and aging individuals, to physically challenged individuals, to emotionally disturbed individuals, to those people who are shut-ins, ministry to ministers, to the heterosexual community, to the alcoholic individual, to the drug addicted individual, and to those who have been victims of child abuse or incest.

There are some common goals for each of those groups, and some specialized goals for individual groups. Among those common goals are the publication of resource pamphlets outlining in detail where to go for help of a certain nature, the manufacturing of filmstrips and slide

Department of Christian Education

By Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

At General Conference, the Fellowship approved a new structure for dealing with Christian Education. The Commission system just had not been working. Over the years, with a few exceptions, nothing had been done for the Christian Education needs of the Fellowship. Local churches have been left to their own devices. Resources have not been widely shared. The new structure, which hopes to change this is as follows:

"This department would be located at the UFMCC headquarters in Los Angeles, to permit greater coordination with Publications and STI and the Resident elders . . . Under the direction of the Moderator and

a resident elder, utilizing the administrative staff for production and distribution of materials, the Department of Christian Education will be charged with: 1. the solicitation and coordination of materials from the laity and clergy of the UFMCC . . . 2. the adaptation of existing Christian Education materials to the needs of the Fellowship. 3. the production of new materials appropriate for use in UFMCC. 4. the identification and sharing of information about diverse models of Christian Education programs and materials already extant . . . and 5. the Board of Elders, acting as an editorial review Board, must review and approve all materials before publication." (from the Elders' "White Paper").

We are happy to announce that we are now

able to offer the following:

1. Our first original curriculum offering, a course in Christian communications entitled "What Are We Saying? Workshops in communication Skills for Christians", by Rev. Claudia Vierra. A cassette tape accompanies the written material. It is available through our Church Services Department.
2. We have finished the first RE-SOURCE PACKET: this one is for Study Groups (sort of an MCC starter-kit!). It includes the new booklet, "How To Start A Study Group" by Rev. Frank Scott, and many other useful materials and ideas. It is

shows to help raise congregational awareness concerning the need for outreach ministries, the removal of stumbling blocks (such as no deaf interpreters, no wheelchair ramps, etc.) from the path of those who would join us in worship, and the establishment of community awareness and outreach programs.

Our greatest need is people-power. We need people from all over this fellowship to reach out, to join with us in getting this program started. Lay ministers, professional ministers, congregational members -- anyone with a feeling of wanting to help others. Many of us have walked the paths that some of these people are now stumbling down. Many of us have been drug addicts. Many of us have been alcoholics. Many of us are either aged or aging individuals. A few of us are transvestites. A few of us are transgender individuals. What is it in us that makes us want to stay in our comfortable closets, makes us afraid to reach out?

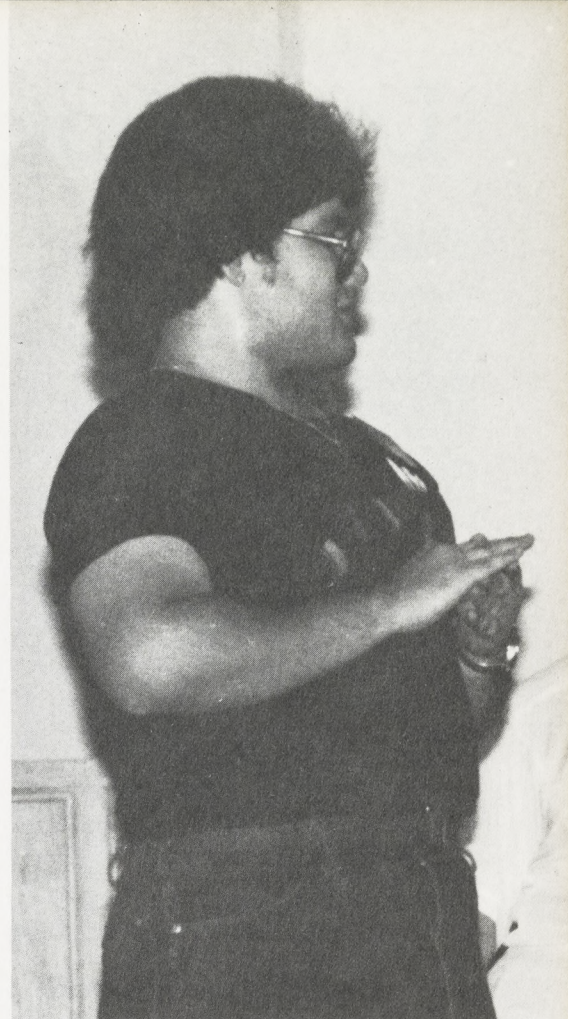
I have been in prison. I know what it is like to have to deal with overwhelming loneliness, with separation, with filth and hatred and degradation on a day-to-day basis. Now that I am not in that situation any longer, will I not be judged more harshly if I don't try and show someone else how Christ liberated me from that hell?

Can we claim to be an ecumenical

church--a church for all people--if we have no deaf interpreters, no crisis intervention facilities, no counselors, no wheelchair ramps, no Alcoholics Together groups, no nursing home ministries, no shut-in ministries, no drug counseling, no incest and rape counseling, and often don't even minister to our very own ministers? If we can't take care of our own handicaps through obedience to Christ, how can we ever hope to reach out successfully to the heterosexual community and let them see the Christ in us?

Join us. Write, today, to the Commission on Innovative Ministries, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA, 90029. Let us know what you are interested in, what group of people you want to help with, what you can do to help. Please don't put it off. There is plenty for you to do. Volunteers are already putting our By Laws into Braille and making tapes of "Homosexuality and the Bible," so that blind Christians will be able to have access to those things. Others are teaching sign interpretation for the deaf.

Please help. What if Christ came tomorrow, and you hadn't done one thing for "the least" of these, our brothers and sisters? Do you want to hear from Christ the words "Depart from me into everlasting punishment. Inasmuch as you did it not to the least of these my brothers (or sisters), you did it not to me."?



Ben Hernandez interprets for the deaf during a worship service. (Photo by Rob Long, Toronto)

gets off the ground in 1980

- available free to all Study Groups, and for a nominal fee for all others through Church Services.
3. We are making available resource materials from the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church for pulpit committees.
 4. We also are offering an already published (and widely acclaimed) six week curriculum on introduction to prayer entitled *Workbook of Living Prayer*, by Maxie Dunham. This program has been used in several MCC churches with wonderful results.

5. We are delighted that we will be making available, through the Department of Christian Education, Rev. Jim Glycer's "Lenten Living Room Series," both editions. Presently it is being edited and reworked. If you want the old version for this year, contact Rev. Glycer, at MCC Kansas City, MO.

Furthermore, we have been promised that in the next year we will be receiving material for the first comprehensive children's curriculum (Sunday School), one for primaries and one for juniors. At the same time, we are finishing up a basic "Homosexuality and the Bible" curriculum, and RESOURCE PACKETS for membership classes and Deacon's training

classes. All of these will be available in the spring of 1980.

We need your help! If you are currently involved in planning or presenting a Christian Education program in your church that has worked, let us know about it! Send us generalized material or detailed curriculum. Share the wealth!

THE 80's
CAN
BE OURS

'Leap frog' faith leads Melbourne

By Rev. Karen Lindstrom
Pastor, MCC Melbourne, Australia

This is a story about "Leap-Frog" (or was that "Leap-Faith"?), trust in God, and a group of people who are half-way through tomorrow when Kansas City wakes up today. (Confused? Just put it down to the mystery of the International Date Line; then we can go on!).

Long ago MCC Melbourne moved into a beautiful old Victorian mansion in a quiet central suburb of Melbourne. Well, the place wasn't so beautiful at first. . . it was filled with rubbish, debris, five years of dusty neglect and the same amount of pigeon droppings. But many hands scraped, washed, painted; restoring the 80-year old wood parquetry wood floors and tile foyer, even restoring the 10 and 15-branch Venetian crystal chandeliers that hung in every room. The rent was high, but the people took a "leap" of faith and made ends meet. As time went on, having chapel, offices, social hall, etc., in one place helped the people grow comfortable, secure and gradually insulated from the cold, cruel world.

Then two years ago, the rent was dramatically increased. But the people forgot how to "leap" and decided to try and absorb this expense rather than go outside this comfortable, safe place, which had become beautiful with long hours of hard work by many loving hands. The cost of everything else went up, and the comfortable building became a worrisome burden.

Just before General Conference 1979, the group was told that the rent would go up again, the owner was demanding storage space, the 80-year old plaster ceilings began to crack and fall down, and there was no way to meet this added expense. The people decided that a Prayer Marathon was in order, as direction was sorely needed, the pastors were 10,000 miles away; they would have to trust God more than they ever had before.

A curious thing happened. The chapel was ablaze for 48 hours straight. People coming in for their one or two hour sessions stopped looking at the gilded columns in the foyer and the chandeliers, and started looking at the friend who had kept the vigil before them in a new light. People began to take "leaps of faith" in shedding their fears and joining together to meet community needs. The Board took a "leap of faith", and informed the estate agent "We're not afraid anymore" (catchy phrase) "and we're not going to pay

blackmail rates just to keep this building."

The clerk of the Board, closeted for the 32 years of his relationship, took a "leap of faith" and began making contacts with the churches he'd played in as organizer for over 30 years about the need of MCC to use facilities for worship. Another board member, an Elder and Chief Steward of a Uniting Church took a "leap", and, disclosing himself to his parish council when the Board approached his Church to use their sanctuary, pleaded MCC's case. The parish council reacted viciously and rejected the groups submission. The Elder is now facing possible removal from office and even revocation of membership he has held for over 35 years. But the "leap of faith" gave him the courage to try and the grace to absorb the cost of his discipleship. The minister of that Church remarked, "You've taught us the meaning of grace; you were abused, demeaned and rejected, yet your people walked out as they walked in: heads high, and in the peace of Christ. . . I am ashamed." But the "leap-frog" (or was that "leap-faith"?) didn't stop there.

The group, after spending a month removing splinters from their noses off some of the finest Church doors in Melbourne, found a parish that accepted submissions for use of their Church premises. As the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Church merged into the Uniting Churches of Australia recently, a continuing Congregational Church made the group wary, but hopeful.

Another parish council meeting. Approval! "Come and share our building on Sunday and Thursday nights." The group gave thanks for the "leap" that brought them thus far. Formal notice to quit the premises was given; we were stepping out in three weeks time. And they rested. . . this "leap-frog" (or was it faith) business was wearisome at times.

But five days before the group was to leave, this Church changed its mind. "No, you're not welcome after all." Five days, no place to worship, no office space, no place for Christian education or mid-week worship. The people were disillusioned, discouraged and just a bit apprehensive about the future. But the clerk, the Board, the Pastors and the staff said: "Come on, we've learned how to 'leap.' God knows we're weary, but let's keep leaping. It doesn't have to be a big leap, just trying and trusting will make it happen. . . come on!"

So the leap-faith (or was it frog?) became contagious. People who held "responsible" positions in government were going to friends of many years in the

churches, disclosing themselves, and asking for lists of every vacant parish Church and hall within a 30 mile radius of Melbourne. Others opened up their houses in case the space was needed for services; others cleaned out spare rooms to store church furniture. Some checked out the parks to find suitable open-air meeting places should the group be homeless. And it was happening inside the group as well. People without cars were suddenly getting rides home instead of taking public transport. Mid-week services swelled to over 50% of Sunday attendance. The Prayer Marathon turned into a prayer circle everytime the group got together. The commitment to new works was continued in the Perth Project; people from this Melbourne group committing funds over and above tithes for the work in a city 3,000 miles away for people they had never met, and may never meet. In short, this little group began to see that the most important possession they had was their faith and each other, and that was making quite an impression on the many people who were watching unobserved.

Institutional Ministries ...

During the course of the past year a group of leaders in the prison ministries of various organizations throughout the country have been meeting to prepare a paper dealing with the topic of prison ministry in the jails and prisons of the USA. We have developed a three part paper dealing with the institutional chaplain, volunteers in ministry from outside the criminal justice system, and goals for reform in the whole system.

This group of people has been meeting under the auspices of the Joint Strategy & Action Commission's National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice. Since the Commission is a part of the National Council of Churches, an acceptance of this paper should mean additional support from member churches for the work that MCC is doing as a ministry from outside the system.

Our presentation to the NITFCJ took place in New York City on January 28-29. Since we were invited by JSAC to participate in this process, they have been paying for all travel connected with these meetings. We are certainly grateful for this opportunity and pray that it may be a productive task.

e group to find new church home

The clerk was at it again (I think he got a pogo stick from God), and a Church two kilometers from the old Centre said, "We see your difficulty, we have openings for evening activities for the next month. Come and worship here." The group shook its head to make sure it had heard correctly. Yes, we'll come, and thank you. A place to worship, "don't worry that it's just for a month, we'll find something more permanent." Now, "leap" again for office and storage space. Half of this group took lunch breaks to look, others took a different route home each night checking out rental advertisements on their way. As the "leaps" increased, so did the possibilities. Office space! Only one kilometer from the old Centre, reasonable and the agent gave it with a week's free rent. Storage space in the city, going at \$8 a week; the agent gave it to the group for \$8 a month. Thank you, Jesus! Let's leap some more!

Moving day. Maybe six people will

show up so that the pastors won't need the neck brace and the chiropractor afterwards. . . and maybe some big cars to move everything in 47 trips. Lo and behold, a staff member with a two ton moving truck . . . his offering above tithes for the week. Good heavens! Twenty three people moving and cleaning at the old Centre, and four more at the new office. "Is it alright if I come and paint the skirting boards, or turn the weed patch outside into a garden?"

There goes that clerk again! On the day we moved out of the old Centre, another Uniting Church told MCC that it had granted use of their facilities for the next six months; the minister there hoping that the dialogue between the two groups would turn into a long-term sharing relationship. And the first church asking the group to stay: "Don't go . . . you've brought our Church to life again . . . you're teaching us how to love and to openly care about and for each other." The new Church saying

"Please come, you can teach us how to 'leap' again."

So this little group, who learned how to take a leap of faith (or was that frog?) have now virtually incorporated leap-frog-faith into their spiritual lives, which is daily growing in its visible, committed application.

This story is leading up to sharing with you, Melbourne's new worship venue, which is the Dorcas Street Uniting Church, Dorcas Street South Melbourne. And new offices at 541 St. Kilda Road, Suite 3, Melbourne. But we wanted you in our Fellowship family to know how it happened. And that a leap of faith can become a healthy "leap-frog" of trusting God and acting upon that leap with a confidence that God's guidance is a REALITY. We hope you'll rejoice with our new directions, and that you'll take up our invitation to start an active program of leap-frog in your lives (. . . or was that leap-FAITH?).

A vision of the laity in the 80's

By Jim Kerber

Seeing the roots of our Fellowship begin and grow over the past decade, we can see many aspects of our churches that have been established, experimented with, and now well on their way to maturity. We've established a strong clergy and found ways to equip them for the varied and challenging ministry of pastoring a Metropolitan Community Church. We've established a system of government which, while not perfect, allows each church the freedom of individuality and yet unity in the Fellowship as a whole. We've explored the tenets of our faith and while this is still in transition, our roots are founded on Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. We've also seen the laity awaken slowly and realize that this is OUR church and OUR ministry and not exclusively a hierarchical system of professional clergy.

We've established a Commission on Lay Concerns, exchanged ideas, seen more and more training of laity, and I have many dreams for more and more progress for the future of the laity in the 1980s.

I'd like to see a more active laity. I'd like to see us take the reins and build our

churches more effectively. I'd like to see us all explore our own talents, give of them freely, and stop depending on our pastors to do the work for us. We need to realize that we are the church and that God has called each of us to minister to our communities.

I'd like to see a more inclusive laity. I'd like to see us reach out into our communities and minister to women, to the handicapped, to transsexuals, to the heterosexual, to all races, to all ages, to people of any kind of income, and to all who need to know Christ as their savior. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we would do this freely and joyfully and not split our churches over male-God imagery and gay-only bigotry?

I'd like to see us communicate with each other and build stronger inter-church ties. We are the priesthood of believers and should share our knowledge, our ideas, and our concerns. It would be wonderful if bigger and more secure churches would reach out and help smaller, newer congregations with their finances and talents.

I'd also like to see us build a stronger deaconate and stop using our deacon programs as stepping stones to the profes-

sional ministry. In so many of our churches the deaconate is a way of getting one's feet wet in the ministry without making a total commitment to a professional seminary or an exhorter program. I wish we could explore lay ministry to its fullest and not consider deacons as junior exhorters. I wish we could give deacons the support and respect they deserve for all the work they do.

In the 1980s I'd also like to see us elect a lay elder. Although I think most of our elders are fine people and are doing a fine job, they are all clergy and we are developing a "tradition" of clergy-only elders. If we had a lay elder, the laity in this fellowship would truly know that we are the church, that we are truly governing ourselves and that each person in the fellowship has the potential to share his or her gifts with others and that one does not have to pursue the professional ministry to be able to fully minister to others.

These are my dreams for the laity in the 1980s. I hope I can look back at the beginning of 1990 and see that we've fully developed as a mature fellowship of churches and that we laypeople have fully used the gifts God has given us.

ON THE WAY TO ONE HUNDRED

By Galen M. Moon

"Man, you're old enough to die. Why don't you crawl off and hide instead of trying to scare us?"

It was in a college lecture room and up to this moment there had seemed to be a rapport of genuine interest. Questions about my seventy years as a gay person had led me to believe at least part of the audience had grasped the points presented.

Sure, I was trying to tear down myths and lies and spur an attempt to overcome ignorance. Perhaps my efforts to use idioms of the day had failed to sustain the truths. Trolls, tricks, rough trade, orgies, fems, macho and other descriptive terms had been a part of my presentation.

Had I failed to make myself a functioning, happy part of the scene? He's a good looking youngster, probably has a lot of friends, have to try to get under that mask he's holding.

"My boy, you are also old enough to die. Why don't you try to hide from the dangers? Think about it. The trick you pick up tonight may turn out to be your killer. Driving home from the bar may be your end. Groggy with drink and angry because your youth and beauty failed to get you into somebody's bed, you can create the killer accident. Of course that's not proveable at this moment. What is absolutely certain, however, is that your attitude toward maturation, toward the length of life insures that you will never experience or enjoy the most satisfying years of life. You're the one who is old enough to die, I'm young enough to live.

"What I've been trying to tell all of

you is what the foundation of psychology indicates: What the mind believes, the mind will do. In other words, it's all in your head. If you go on thinking you'll be washed up and limp at thirty, that's what you'll likely find when you reach that age. You'll create that condition. You'll be a lonely, miserable old troll until you wake up to the fact that you control the conditions of your aging. What you expect is what you'll find. I'm not talking about what you tell others, that can be a pile of manure. It's what the real you, the inside person, believes that shapes your destiny.

"I can be wrong but I'll wager your insulting statement was made to impress certain people who are here. But, behind that you may be having such thoughts as, 'If I get to be seventy-five I hope my body is as trim and I can show as much poise and alertness as that old bastard seems to have'. Right?"

"You can. All of you can. Begin right now to know that most of the stuff we gays say about our lifestyle and its results are real, honest to God fairy tales! You can be an active, practicing homosexual person as long as you live. I know a couple who have been together for sixty-six years. Each has passed the ninety year mark but they still enjoy all facets of living, including sex. And, just to make it a little more positive, young man, if you'll give me a chance, I'll prove to you that I'm probably better in bed than a lot of the young hunks you pick up."

The audience roars. Some fellow shouts, "Take him up on that, Kenny. I dare you!" But the embarrassed Kenny

fights his way to the aisle and runs out of the room.

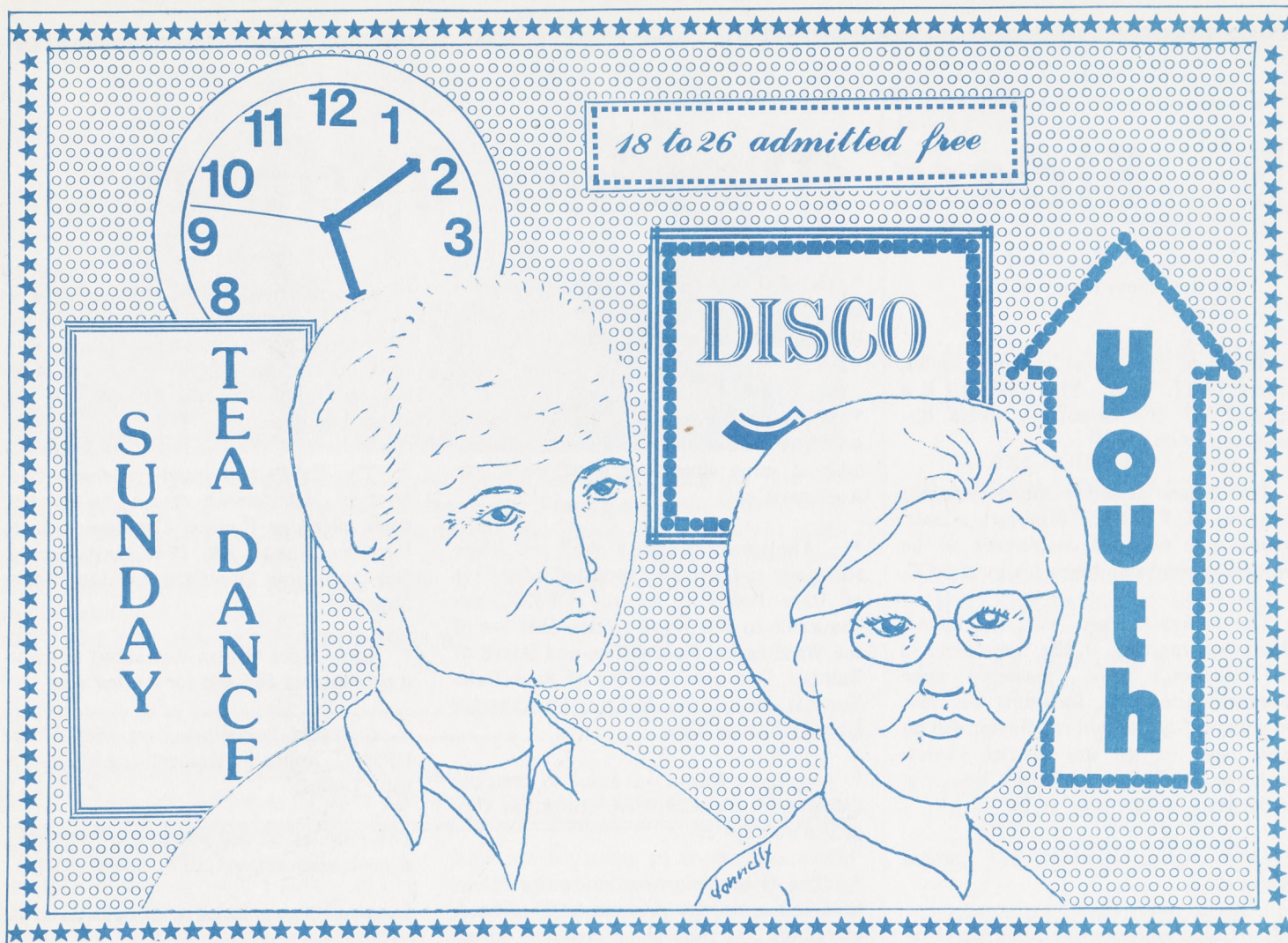
It must have been a cruel encounter for Kenny, more about that later. Right now a very attractive young woman with gorgeous auburn hair stands to question. "Are you telling us that at your age you still enjoy participating in sex?"

"You understood correctly, my dear. I certainly do and I'll add something important to that statement. Most of those experiences now are more fulfilling and enjoyable than when I was your age. Today an ecstatic climax lifts me to a real high from which people and life are revealed as beautiful and worthy of trust and affection."

A husky fellow, his age disguised by a fierce looking black beard rises. "What you're saying doesn't agree with text books and research papers."

"Of course not. What you're hearing from me is a reading from experience. It's not theory and it's not summarized replies from inmates of nursing homes. You'll have to decide whether the writer of the text knows more about it than a person who is living it. I'm not saying others can't be right, I'm just telling it like it is with me. But, I do need to add something right here.

"It's true that I can't remember a time when I did not look forward to living for at least a hundred years. However, certainty, assurance, and strength for such a performance only became recognizable in my life pattern a few years ago. It came through a spiritual experience. A strange but comforting happening which brought an



entirely new interpretation of terms which most of us bounce around every day. It came about this way:

"I met a dynamic young woman who was trying to establish a church in which gay people could approach the ageless truths of the teachings of that person known as Jesus. She manages to strip away all of the jerry-built structures of interpretation which obscure truth. Thus, she opens a path one can follow right to The Source. I didn't come out of a religious background. From early years I had avoided people and organizations labeling me as a sinner. The Rev. Carol Cureton did nothing like that, she just invited you to explore for yourself.

"When I discovered that nowhere in the recorded words of Jesus is there a condemnation of homosexuality, I realized people are being victimized by others literally putting words into the mouth of The Master. Once you allow yourself to get acquainted with that Beautiful Man you can't keep from falling in love with Him. After that everything is different, every living person is a reflection of the Source of Life. That's why each of you is beautiful to me and why I project love and friendship. Which brings us to the secret of successful living: what you put out deter-

mines what you will receive.

"Let's leave it there, with this brief summary: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you . . . and what I want is love!"

A few days later, one of the students who had helped arrange my appearance at the university called to ask if he could come by with Kenny.

Face to face, Kenny was even more attractive than I had judged from the platform. His handsomeness was intensified by a seeming shyness as he tried to apologize. My attempts to put him at ease, to assure that no apology was necessary because he was entitled to his own measurements only seemed to make him uncomfortable.

Suddenly he gets up and moves behind my chair. A hand begins stroking my shoulder. Then he speaks, "I've hated old men ever since one of them forced me to admit what I am. He was a teacher and an artist. Painted great pictures of naked men. I loved him. Tried to seduce him without admitting what I was doing. He wouldn't paint my picture, wouldn't look at my body. Said I was a liar and he didn't like liars. Finally, when I could see no other way to get to him, I said it. I told him I was a faggot, that I loved him and

wanted him to take me to bed. He laughed at me. I've been trying to make old men pay for that insult ever since that day.

"He made me admit I'm a faggot and I hate being a faggot. You were up there telling us it's not wrong. Trying to make us believe homos can live long, happy lives. I had to try to ridicule you. I haven't had a minute's happiness since I faced the truth about myself. The whole thing's one big crock of unhappiness but I can't find a way out."

After a long silence, I ask, "So what do you want from me? Let you work off your frustrations on me?"

The stroking stops. He moves around to stand in front of me. "That's an idea. You ugly old white-haired troll. You got the guts to take it?"

Bruce is up and moving toward the door. "I gotta go, Kenny. Call me if you need a ride back."

Next morning, as I prepare breakfast, Kenny comes from the shower and after a kiss asks this question: "What do you suppose ever made me think Lowery should have wanted to paint my picture?"

It takes a minute to formulate a soft answer: "When the love one professes for another is really self-love, one's judgment is apt to be badly warped."

Elders' Meeting Update

By Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

The Board of Elders met in Los Angeles, January 14-17, 1980. The following is a summary of the important items discussed and acted upon:

- * The Elders passed a ruling requiring all active U.F.M.C.C. Ministers, Chairpersons and full-time employees to be Members-in-good-standing of a local MCC.

- * The Elders worked with the MCAC (which was meeting at the same time in San Francisco.) We considered some procedural questions, including the fact that *accepted* ordination candidates will no longer have to see the District Review Committee; deadlines for 1981 licensing; and licensing in Extension areas.

- * MCC-Joplin, Missouri was granted Mission status.

- * The Elders endorsed the April March on Tallahassee (The Long Trek) designed to protest the harassment of our church in Tallahassee, Florida, and to stand up for gay civil rights.

- * P.J. Schoenwether (T. Earlye Scott) was appointed Interim Editor of *In Unity* until the April meeting, at which time an editorial policy will also be considered.

- * Discussed Rev. Elder Perry's trip to England and Copenhagen in May.

- * Discussed preparations and arrangements for Rev. Jose Mojica's trip to Brazil and South and Central America in March.

- * Accepted Rev. Bill Taylor's resignation as Chairperson of the Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order, with thanks for serving in that position.

- * Appointed Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt to be the new Chair of the FFO Commission.

- * Decided that Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart should accompany Rev. Elder Jean White to Nigeria in November of 1980.

- * Discussed the future of the Commission on Christian Social Action, and decided to look at some alternative structure at our April meeting.

- * Abolished "Task Force" on Race Relations and *instead* appointed a *Director* of Race Relations for the UFMCC, accountable to the Social Action Director of the Washington Field Office and Board of Elders. Our new Director of Race Relations is Ms. Renee McCoy, an exhorter from MCC-New York.

- * Rev. Elder Wilson was asked to chair the Department of Christian Education (see article on page 20).

- * The Commission on Innovative Ministries has some new personnel. The Elders appointed the following people: Robin Miller (MCC-LA) Assistant Chair of the Commission; Rev. George McDermott (MCC-Providence) Ministry to the Blind; Rev. Claudia Vierra and Mr. Jim Kerber (MCC-East Bay) Ministry to Ministers; Rev. Donna Vinson (MCC-Omaha) Ministry to Alcoholics.

- * The Elders retired Rev. Bonnie Daniel from the MCAC with thanks for many years of service. Rev. Valerie Bouchard, as the 1st Alternate, automatically replaces her.

- * The Elders appointed the District Review Committees; we appointed (in all but one case) one man and one woman from each District, plus the MCAC person; and we did not appoint the District Coordinator to the DRC to avoid double jeopardy or conflict of interest.

- * We accepted Carl Matthis' resignation as Chair of the Committee on Church Hymnody; we appointed to the Committee, as members, Rhea Miller, Rev. Joseph Gilbert and Rev. Art Fleschner. The Elders pledged to engage in a thorough search for a qualified chair for the Committee.

- * S.T.I. will hold its first Board of Regents meeting in March, 1980. Regents members are: Rev. Jim Sandmire, Chair, Rev. Elder Hose, Rev. Elder Wilson, Dr. Alice Kitchens, Mr. Gilberto Gerald and Dr. Donald Jolly.

- * The Elders appointed a General Conference Management Team which will begin planning General Conference X, in Houston, August 3-9, 1981, immediately. Our Conference Coordinator is Rev. Pepper Shields.

- * Rev. Elder Wilson was asked to coordinate Project Samaria for its first year.

- * Stringent guidelines were adopted for UFMCC - approved Evangelists and Evangelistic Teams.

The minutes of our meeting are available, at cost, upon request, or by subscription.

Bridge The Gap

Many people have told us that there are Communications Gaps in our Fellowship. If you'd like to help bridge the gap and receive mailings directly from UFMCC (e.g. "Keeping In Touch") just send your name and address to:

"MAILING LIST"

UFMCC

5300 Santa Monica Boulevard

No. 304

Los Angeles, CA 90029

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ZIP _____



CONTEST: The most unique caption entered for this picture will win a one year free subscription to IN UNITY or a night on the town with these people. Conditions of night on the town: transportation not included; lodging not included; expenses not included. 1st ROW: P.J. Schoenwether, burro 2nd ROW: (l-r) Rev. Elder John Hose, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Rev. Elder Jean White. 3rd ROW: Judy Woodruff, Rick O'Dell, Phil Gallnitz.

ENTRY BLANK: MY CAPTION FOR PICTURE:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX : If I win I want

☐ One year free subscription to IN UNITY ☐ Night on the town--I understand all conditions

continued from page 6

brutally murdered could possibly still be alive. Her followers tend to smile and go about the work which this leader encouraged. They seem to feel that the burden of proof is not on them. In their opinion, time will prove them right. In addition, they point to their own activities and accomplishments as proof that she is still alive.

It has been reported, however, that

ELDERS' MINUTES

are now available through
Subscription

In accordance with a resolution passed at General Conference, the minutes of Elders' meetings will now be provided to individuals or churches by the Fellowship Offices at a yearly subscription rate of \$7.50 (\$4.00 for any single set). We will bill only churches; individuals are requested to please remit a check or money order made out to UFMCC with their subscription order.

To begin this year's series of minutes (October '79 to October '80), please send your name, address, and check or money order to:

MINUTES/UFMCC Clerk
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, California 90029

there are beginning to be factions within the group of followers, who are arguing about how the events of their founder's life should be interpreted, acted out, observed, and commemorated. One faction does not even care about those issues, but understands its primary task to be the completion of the work that the Black Lesbian Feminist from South Africa started. Another group believes that the primary task is to get out on the streets, and persuade more and more people to be followers, so that eventually everybody will be doing the work that the Black Lesbian Feminist from South Africa started.

In this writer's opinion, they are probably right about one thing: only time will tell which group is right. Perhaps none of them have the whole truth. Perhaps *all* of them are right, if only partially so. They just can't seem to comprehend that they are all basically claiming the same thing, and working towards the same goal. Many people place their hope in the fact that the Black Lesbian Feminist from South Africa tried to teach people the vital importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. Unfortunately, that teaching often gets lost in the discussions of policy and history within the groups. Nevertheless, there are those who choose to live with hope...

CONSCIOUSNESS RAZORS

BLACK WOMEN ARE FOUR TIMES
AS LIKELY TO DIE OF CHILD
BIRTH AS ARE WHITE WOMEN

INFANT MORTALITY FOR
BLACKS IS ALMOST TWICE THAT
OF WHITES

THE AMERICAN INDIAN HAS A
LIFE EXPECTANCY OF 48 YEARS

MEXICAN AMERICAN MEN HAVE
A LIFE EXPECTANCY OF 58
YEARS

BLACKS DIE TWICE AS
FREQUENTLY AS DO WHITES
FROM TUBERCULOSIS,
INFLUENZA AND PNEUMONIA

80-85% OF LEAD POISONING
VICTIMS IN THE U.S. ARE
NON-WHITE

11% OF THE U.S. POPULATION
(1970 CENSUS) ARE BLACK, BUT,
42% OF THE U.S. PRISONERS ARE
BLACK

STONEWALL WAS INITIATED BY
BLACK AND LATIN GAYS

ABOUT 90% OF RESERVATION
DWELLINGS ARE SUBSTANDARD

POLICE, ON A NATIONAL
AVERAGE, HAVE USED "FATAL
FORCE" ON 7 TIMES AS MANY
BLACKS AS WHITES

THERE IS ONE MEXICAN
AMERICAN LAWYER FOR EVERY
9,482 MEXICAN AMERICANS. IN
COMPARISON, THERE IS ONE
ANGLO LAWYER FOR EVERY 530
ANGLOS

*a message from your Fellowship
Committee on Racism*

Neither rain nor sleet can stop marchers in Sacramento, CA

By Lucia Chappelle

Torrential rains and flash flood warnings could not deter thousands of lesbians, gays, and their supporters from marching through the capitol of California for the right to work and live in peace.

"Some people may call it rain," said Gray Davis, Governor Jerry Brown's Chief of Staff, "I call it commitment."

The January 15th March on Sacramento, organized by California Human Rights Advocates (CHRA) to urge the passage of three bills that would outlaw job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to demand an end to anti-gay violence, echoed the call to new activism first sounded by the March on Washington last fall. It also announced the awakening of mass state level gay/lesbian legislative politics, a sleeping giant here since the 1971 march for Rep. Willie Brown's consenting adults bill.

Typically confusing crowd estimates ranged from 3,000 to 20,000, almost all of whom stood in pouring rain and ankle-deep mud for an hour-long rally. Most of them could not hear, since the weather made it impossible to set up the sound system. Lesbian comic Robin Tyler hosted the gathering that featured songs from the Nineteenth Century women's movement sung by the San Francisco Lesbian Chorus, a combined offering from the Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus and the San Francisco Gay Marching Band, and speakers including the Rev. Elder Troy Perry, attorney Flo Kennedy, State Senator Milton Marks (R-S.F.), San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt, and representatives from the National Organization for Women and the United Farm Workers.

Author of Assembly Bill 1, Rep. Art Agnos (D-S.F.), said that he was "choking with pride" to see the demonstrators brave the storm. He and Senator Dave Roberti (D-L.A.), who penned the companion Senate bill that would add "sexual orientation" to the protected categories in the state Fair Employment Practices Act, were delighted for the energetic backing of their measures, which both face congressional storms this month.

While Gray Davis made a strong pro gay statement on Gov. Brown's behalf, former state official Dr. Josette Mondinaro accused Brown of giving only token support in order to procure lesbian/gay money for his presidential campaign. Brown aide Bob Moore denied the charges in a meeting with constituent lobbyists the following day, citing the recent Executive Order banning discrimination against homosexuals in state employment.

The march and rally were preceded by an ecumenical worship service at MCC-Sacramento sponsored by MCC and the various denominational caucuses. Rev. Perry preached at the evening MCC service.

Members of MCC-Sacramento were quite active in the planning and execution of the demonstration. In one of the only "minor incidents" during the march, a local MCC person was knocked down by a car (but not injured) when he attempted to stop cross-traffic at an intersection on the route that had been neglected by police.

On Monday the 14th, the halls of the congressional office building teemed with march participants who stayed over to personally lobby their representatives. CHRA provided up to the minute information on which swaying congresspersons needed encouragement and what approaches would be most effective.

UPDATE!!!!

DATELINE SACRAMENTO - A.B. 1 passed the House Ways and Means Committee by an 11-5 majority on January 15th and now faces a vote by the full House.

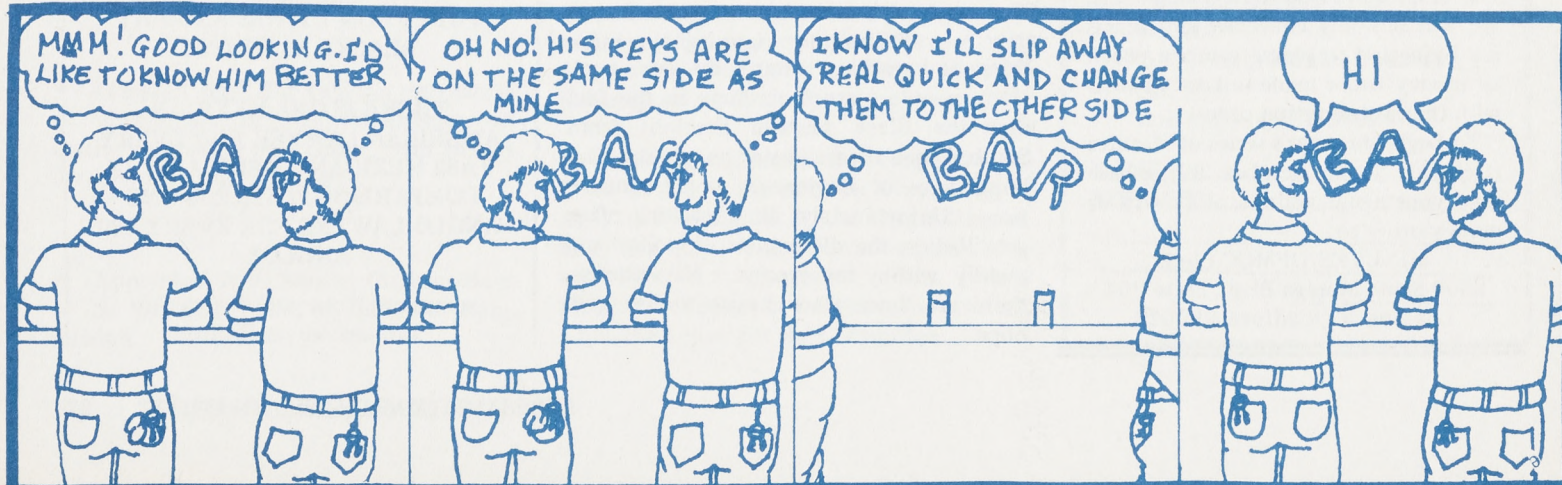
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answer that call to train, teach, and feed us spiritually and emotionally. What stops us from returning that love in a mutual partnership between laity and clergy? God has been doing most of the work of "ministering to the professional minister." It's time we all began to share the burden.

Laypeople are not professionals, yet there are many ways we can help. The more involved we are in our individual churches the more freedom the clergy have to expand their ministries and education. We become the beneficiaries. The more support and encouragement we give them, the more we change our attitudes towards them as human beings, the more they will feel positive about the arduous tasks inherent in their profession. If we become concerned about a decent contract for our pastor, a livable wage, a comfortable place for them to live and have privacy and space, our walk with Christ will better include these shepherding us down that path. If our consciousness is raised perhaps we'll burn out fewer ministers in our Fellowship and we will more fully explore both sides of the word "ministry."

Jim Kerber is a layperson in MCC San Francisco who has facilitated a popular "Ministering to Ministers" workshop in the Northwest District.

FELLOWSHIP FUNNIES



ZECHARIAH'S SONG

LUKE 1:68-79

The Rev. Pepper Shields

God,
You who were with Israel
are with me today
You who kept your word to my ancestors
have kept your word to me.
Truly you are worthy of my praise!
You promised to redeem your people
to come to us
to hear us
to be among
and within us,
AND YOU HAVE KEPT YOUR PROMISE!
Because of you we are redeemed, renewed,
alive,
whole.
From those who hate
deny,
terrorize
You have saved us.
Long before I lived
you knew me,
just as you have known
those who lived before me.
To them, as to me,
you made a commitment
that you would be our God
and we would be your people.
I see our self-willed rejection of your love
and ask myself why you stayed with us
remained true
unchanging
loving
forgiving.
I look through history (theirs/mine/ours);
I see the times we have turned from you
against you
on you,
and I confess our urge to wander.
To us who grumble in the heat of the desert
hoard bread in our fear
build idols in our doubt
To us you remain faithful
true to your promise
constant in your purpose.
My vanity tells me that it is because I am deserving
Yet my heart knows that it is because
(and only because)

you are holy
merciful
caring.
But still I ask why
and I hear your answering voice:
"BECAUSE YOU ARE MINE"
Knowing you,
beginning to comprehend that all humanity is yours,
that your compassion is toward all creation,
I know too that you have done all this for me
so that I might love you
serve your creation
tell others of your mercy
In order that they, too, might live
be forgiven
comforted
redeemed.
You have given us salvation
Torn away our chains
Freed us from our fetters
Liberated us from our (self-imposed) prisons
by becoming one of us
searching for us
sharing with us
suffering for us.
Because of your tender mercies
our shadowed night is gone;
We live in the brightness of Day.
Our dark paths have been illumined by your Sun.
Our dark crevices of fear
loneliness
hopelessness
isolation
have been flooded by the searching rays of your Light.
We bask in the warmth of your love
assurance
affirmation
confirmation.
And because of you
we are not afraid;
Because of you
we are at peace.
We celebrate
rejoice
clap our hands
lift our voices
to echo the song of our ancestors:
"OUR GOD HAS REMEMBERED US!!"
Alleluia.

samaritan theological institute

By Rev. Pepper Shields
Registrar
Samaritan Theological Institute

Like many of us in UFMCC I have worn several hats while being involved in service to the Fellowship. A year and a half ago I moved to Los Angeles "to spend a year getting to know the Fellowship before returning to the field." In that time I have had many exciting, enlightening and unique experiences.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my time here has been my involvement with Samaritan Theological Institute, first as a student and then as Registrar for the school. Having spent four years in a large fundamental Bible College, and having been acquainted with several other notable institutions of higher education, I found STI to be, in many ways, different from any of the others.

What first struck me was the warm, personal atmosphere here at STI. Perhaps because it is a small school, there seems to be a sense of "family" which I had not observed in other schools. My needs were considered important; emphasis was on me as an individual, rather than as an object, a statistic, into which needed to be poured a certain number of credit hours of curriculum. I found the educational programs geared toward meeting the needs of the student, as opposed to fitting the student into a proscribed structure of learning with a catalog as its only guiding rule.

I have been impressed, both as a student and as a member of the staff at STI, by the wealth of educational opportunities available here. The curriculum, as I have mentioned before, is designed to meet me "where I am," and to lead me toward a deeper understanding of my role as one called by God to share the message of God's love. Each class session was, for me, an exercise in stretching, expanding and maturing.

I found the instructors not only

capable, knowledgeable and articulate, but caring, person-oriented people. They were open, approachable, and willing to dialog. I felt a strong sense that I was being prepared to go out into a real world -- being made ready to face life-situations, rather than being offered an unrealistic, idealistic picture of "how it should be."

Samaritan, in its role as a ministry equipping center has been, for me, a place where I have been given opportunity through resident classes, correspondence courses, intensive 1 to 2 week courses, and 1 day seminars, to learn and to apply theory to life-situations.

Even as a student on campus, I was not fully aware of how much STI is involved in service to the Fellowship at large. It was only as I was putting together our new STI Newsletter, *Equip Yourself*, that I became really conscious of the many services offered by the school. The following list is just a part of the work carried on by STI in its attempt to provide the educational opportunities and resources necessary to the growth of both our clergy and laity as they seek to increase their knowledge and skills:

a bookstore offering titles in the areas of Theology, Church History, Sexuality, Church Administration and other areas of interest to the Church

a library of over 3,000 volumes and periodicals

administration and evaluation of the UFMCC proficiency examinations for licensing candidates preparing for the professional ministry within UFMCC

evaluation of academic records of licensing candidates upon request

a comprehensive bibliography of books recommended for ministerial students and clergy (a valuable tool for lay people involved in the Church, as well)

essays by STI faculty and copies of ordination theses of UFMCC clergy

thirteen Samaritan Seminars by faculty of STI covering a broad area of issues and subjects useful to the local congregation, groups of churches, and districts

the Church Liturgical Calendar

a correspondence course program available to everyone in the Fellowship

intensive extension course program available to be taught anywhere in the Fellowship

In addition to this partial list, the faculty and staff at STI are daily involved in correspondence with prospective students, grading correspondence courses, writing and revising curriculum and maintaining an ongoing ministry to our current students and to those of the student body who are now out in the field.

I am excited to be a part of STI. The dedication, loyalty, and God-centered, person-oriented atmosphere I have found since coming here have challenged me and thrilled me -- and burdened me. I see the work that is being done, the work which desperately needs to be begun; and I see the limitations we face daily.

As the officially recognized educational institution of the UFMCC, Samaritan seeks to be of service to the Fellowship. We recognize that ours is a big responsibility. We have dreams, goals, ambitions. And, many times, we sense a tremendous frustration. We see, continually, new areas of outreach, new projects (and old ones which have not yet been accomplished) and we try to be realistic.

As is true throughout the Fellowship, financing continues to be one of our biggest drawbacks. Postage, stationery, printing costs, office supplies and resource materials still continue to eat away at our funds. Intentionally, we have attempted to keep tuition fees low. Your Samaritan Sunday offerings and the monthly allotment budgeted to the school all have helped and have been deeply appreciated.

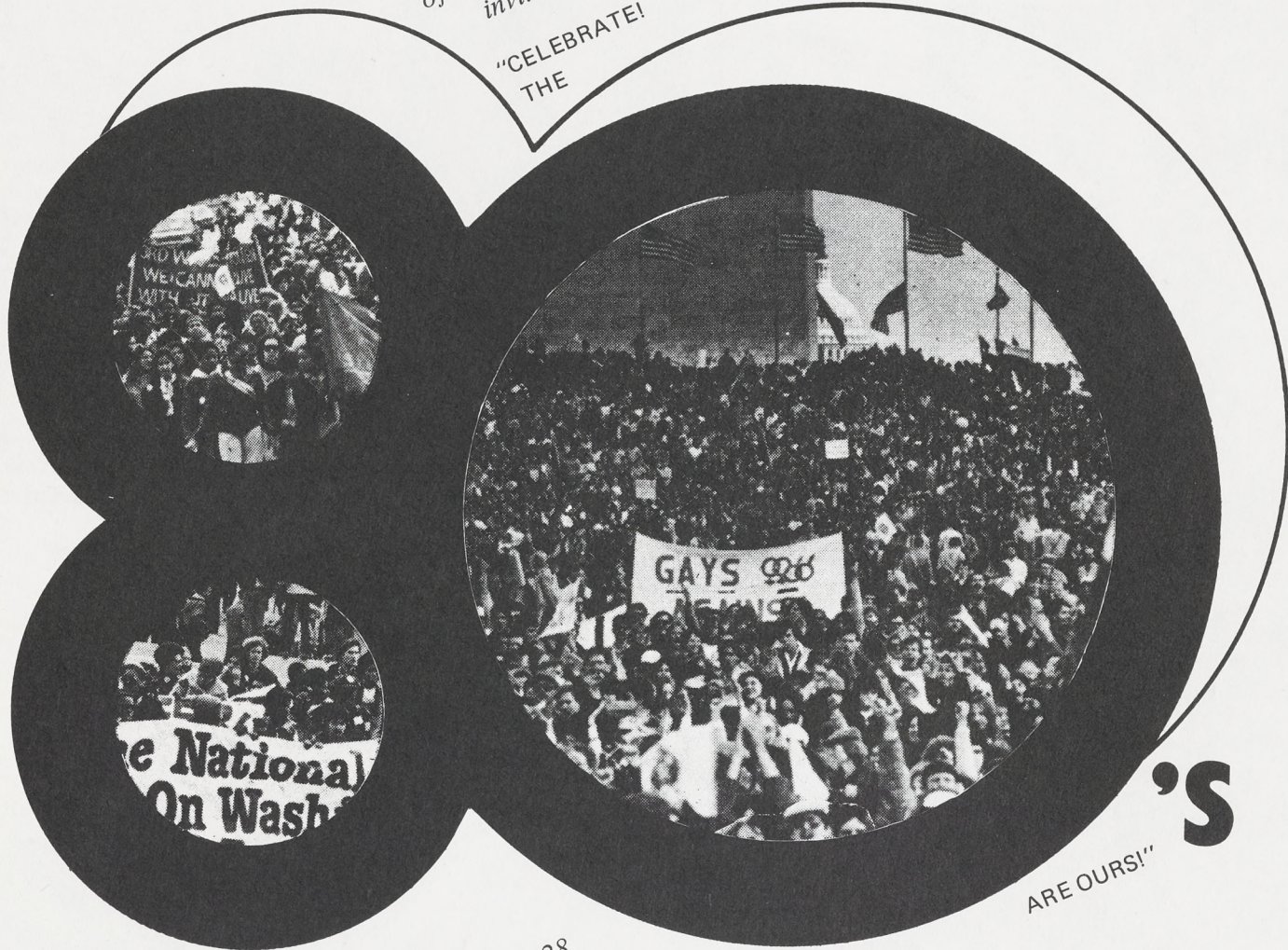
However, if we are to continue to serve you, to grow, to up-grade our programs and services, we need your continual support -- not only your financial gifts (which are urgently needed) but your prayers and input. We want to serve you as effectively as possible -- will you help us to do so?

For a complete list of services and programs offered by STI, and for further information on how you can become involved in your Fellowship's School, please write to either the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, Dean or the Rev. Pepper Shields, Registrar. Our address is SAMARITAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, Suite 104, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90029 (213) 464-5106.

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